What the Little Mouse Brings

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/49999816.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Alana Bloom, Jack Crawford, Jimmy Price, Brian Zeller, Dr. Frederick Chilton
Additional Tags:	Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Alpha/Omega, Alpha Hannibal Lecter, Omega Will Graham, Will Graham Needs a Hug, Will Graham is a Mess, Rape/Non-con Elements, Not between mains, omg there are so many tag options, I'll add more tags as we go along, dont want to ruin the story ya know?, Canon-Typical Violence, Blood and Gore, No beta we die like Anthony Dimmond, editing on ao3 is rubbish, Past Abuse, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, child endangerment, Autism Spectrum, Pregnant Will Graham, Miscarriage, Discussion of Abortion, Mpreg, Post Mpreg, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of What The Little Mouse Brings Series
Stats:	Published: 2023-09-10 Completed: 2024-09-01 Words: 117,044 Chapters: 41/41

What the Little Mouse Brings

by WinstonsDad

Summary

While trying to attend a psychiatry conference in Richmond, Hannibal's car breaks down. The mechanic who tows his car away has some dark secrets tucked away in his basement. Does Hannibal intervene or walk away?

Notes

This is my first fan fic.
All mistakes are my own.

Way Laid Plans.

The drive from Baltimore to Richmond was a simple affair. The roads well maintained, the scenery pleasant, rural becoming Washington back to rural again. Forests becoming homes becoming forests. Traffic become an issue around Fredericksburg, four lanes down to three, three down to two, impatient drivers cutting in the queue, horns sounding every few miles by disgruntled drivers. Hannibal was a very patient man. Traffic didn't phase him, he had music, his mind palace, and after an hour of stand still he received a lovely call from his colleague Alana Bloom enquiring to his ETA. After informing her that he'll be at least another two hours, according to the satnav, she sighed deeply and asked him to call her once he arrived. He would of course acquiesce to her request, ending the call with polite goodbyes.

It was when he neared a town called Golansville, having come off the i95 a few miles back to pass the traffic, that Hannibal's car cut out, causing him to swerve off the road into a ditch. Air bag deployed, seat belt locking and the ditch luckily only being roughly four feet deep, Hannibal was uninjured. He'd feel the bruise from the seatbelt on his shoulder for a few days but is otherwise unscathed.

He realizes his dilemma when trying to exit his car when he tries the door and finds it pinned to the side of the embankment. The car is dead so the automated window won't roll down either. His only option is to push his fingers through the small gap in the sunroof and force the glass back allowing him to climb out of his car. Sliding over the roof and further into the ditch, his feet sinking a foot into the mud, Hannibal finally feels his frustration rising and he lets out a small growl. When he's finally back on the road having scrambled up the grassy ledge, he's sweating and very much losing his temper. His suit is ruined, tiny tears run up his trouser legs and he shucked off his jacket as he was climbing out of the sunroof to allow for better movement. His shirt has grass stains up the sleeves and front. His custom Italian leather loafers are beyond saving. He's a mess and he doesn't like being a mess. He had tired the trunk on his way up the bank but found the lock jammed, the keys useless.

Retrieving his mobile from his trouser pocket he fires off a quick text to Alana telling her of his predicament, then googles local tow trucks and mechanics. He selects the first number on the list and is left hanging for seven rings, Hannibal counts, before a gruff voice answers the call.

Tempted to hang up for wasting his time, Hannibal decides against it as the effort to find another mechanic in a town he has no knowledge of seems like more hard work.

"Hello, I seem to have found myself needing a tow. My car cut out and has slipped down an embankment on Jefferson Davis Highway" Hannibal explains. The person on the other end is silent and Hannibal checks the screen making sure the call is still connected.

"Hello? Can you hear me?" He asks putting the phone back to his ear.

"Yeah I hear ya" comes the growling reply "Just writing down the details"

“Are you able to help me? Or do I need to contact some one else?” Hannibal asks tersely. His patience running very thin by this point. The last thirty minutes not being the best moment of his life.

“Yeah yeah I can come get ya, there a sign or marker near ya?” The voice on the other end wheezes, the click of a lighter sounding.

Hannibal scans the area and reads off the road marker to his left. The man on the phone tells him that he’ll be approximately thirty minutes and hangs up. The deep breath in doesn’t quite feel deep enough to calm him down as Hannibal texts Alana again letting her know he has a tow coming and will unfortunately not able to join her for a while. She replies with a sympathetic message and hopeful see you soon.

Roughly forty five minutes later a battered tow truck appears to Hannibal’s left and slows to a stop. There are empty beer bottles between the windscreen and dash board. And smoke rising from the crack in the drivers window. The man who exits the cab is wearing a pair of dirty oil stained coveralls with a tear on the left knee. He shuffles nonchalantly towards Hannibal with an air of distain, flicking his cigarette butt towards Hannibal car. He gives a low whistle.

“Yer not from round here” he coughs.

“I am not” counters Hannibal.

The man nods and takes another step forward. The scent of unwashed, sweating Alpha hits Hannibal full force as a gust of wind forces the scent onto Hannibal's tongue. He suppresses the urge to gag and instead turns towards his car in its pathetic temporary home.

“Yeah yeah. I see that. Nice car.” The mechanic spits on the ground between them and Hannibal suddenly imagines the mans tongue on his chopping board, knowing what he does about smokers lungs and an alcoholics liver, he envisions the tongue of this overweight, sweating Alpha is the only part salvageable.

Hannibal feigns disinterest and takes his wallet and phone from his pocket and starts googling local cab numbers. “I presume you won’t need my help?”

The man laughs under his breath and shakes his head. He moves forward once more and hands a slightly discolored business card out to Hannibal, taking an obvious sniff as he does. The blatant scenting makes Hannibal’s hackles raise and he swallows down the urge to growl threateningly. Hannibal takes the card and passes the man his keys making sure not to make skin contact.

The man returns to his tow truck as lazily as he left it and starts the process of removing chains from the bed.

Hannibal scrolls his phone for a moment and selects a cab company and relays the same information he gave the tow. He turns his back to the mechanic and waits in silence for the cab to come. Twenty five minutes later and a clean, mid range car appears and the driver gives Hannibal a small wave from his seat.

Hannibal approaches the mechanic before getting in the cab and asks how long he should wait until he calls. The mechanic grunts and shrugs unhelpfully. Hannibal expects nothing less.

The cab ride to the hotel name he gives the driver is spent in silence. The beta man, scentless and timid asks no questions. Choosing wisely it seems to let Hannibal stew in the back seat in his muddy grass stained clothing.

The hotel is as Hannibal expects it to be. Clean, formal, friendly. The receptionist sympathetically looks Hannibal up and down while handing him his key card and lets him know the hotel offers a laundry service and to call the front desk once he's ready to use the services.
Hannibal tries his best to offer his politest smile but clearly doesn't pull it off as well as he thought when the receptionist quickly looks away and thanks him for his stay.

The room is large, with clear, deep, windows looking over the hotel gardens. Heavy blue curtains frame the windows complimenting the deep blue bed spread and black table and chair by the door. Hannibal surveys the room knowing if he weren't in such a bad mood he would be pleased by what he sees. Stripping his clothing off with a snarl on his lips, he places his wallet and keys onto to the table and goes in search of the ensuite. It's tucked down a short corridor past the closet and sports an ample clean bath, walk in shower and white tiles. Complimentary towels and a robe hang on hooks on the wall. Hannibal drops his dirty clothing on the tile floor and turns on the shower. Gels and soaps are offered in a little dish on a shelf and Hannibal sniffs them briefly before settling on the soap as the least offensive of the bunch. He gives himself a perfunctory wash before leaving the shower and putting on the robe.

As he's checking his phone there is a small knock on the door to his room. He opens the door and greeted by a very small, very round beta woman who beams at him kindly holding out a laundry bag.

"The front desk said you might be needing the laundry service sir" she says confidently, opening the top of the laundry bag expectantly.

"Ah yes" he says and walks to the bathroom to retrieve his ruined clothes. He returns and places them in the bag. "I am not sure they can be saved I'm afraid" he confesses

"Everything is worth a go Sir" comes the reply "was there anything else?"

Hannibal is blank for a moment then remembers his shoes "I don't suppose the service includes shoes perhaps?"

The beta woman smiles again and wiggles the bag in front of her, gesturing for him to put them in. He gathers them from beside the door and places those too into the little bag.

“Give me an hour or so Sir and I’ll return these too you”

“Thank you, take your time, you hold my only clothing and I doubt I can walk the streets like this.” he wafts his hand in front of his robe and the woman gives a throating chuckle, bows slightly and walks away.

Hannibal, calmer now for being clean and with the knowledge the hotel he has chosen is the right one, picks up the hotel phone intent on ordering some room service, as seems his plans for the day have now changed. He never deliberately stumbles upon a worthy pig, but they just seem to cross his path once in a while.

A Sigh.

Chapter Notes

Tags have been updated. Please check them.

Hannibal’s dirty clothes come back almost perfect. Even the tiny rips have been expertly repaired. His shoes unfortunately have suffered too much damage by the mud to look as they did, the water damage having left marks along the sole but they are clean, dry and wearable.

He tips the dumpy Beta woman $100 when he sees how much effort she had put into his clothing and she blushes brightly before thanking him and leaving. Hannibal might be a cannibalistic serial killer but he recognizes hard work when he sees it. He tips his servers. On holidays he generously tips his trash collectors and his mail man. His contributions to the Arts Society of Baltimore has gained him high respect within the Arts Community. He attends the opera regularly. He is elite.

Yet the call to the mechanic, has almost rendered him a snarling animal. The audacity of the lowly alpha, worth nothing, to grunt at Hannibal through the phone solidifies Hannibal’s plans for an impromptu hunt.

But first he needs clothing. And shoes. The front desk directs Hannibal to the local strip and he manages to find a suitable clothing store. It's not great. But it will do. He selects one pair of slacks, a dark button up and black jacket with every intention of burning the offending articles once he at home. As he’s leaving with his new purchases his phone rings. Looking at the screen he sees Alana’s name flash up. He commends her patience and answers the call.

“Hannibal, how are you? Will you make it today?” She sounds flustered. Her voice breathy and reluctant.

“I’m afraid I won’t make any of the conferences today. All of my clothing is still in the car and I haven’t found any suitable replacements as yet.” Hannibal responds.

He hears her laugh slightly, a bright happy sound “Hannibal” she sounds exacerbated. “No one is going to be looking at your clothes, they are drawn to your mind, not your wardrobe.”

He tuts playfully. “Now you know how I feel about my attire. Once I have my luggage I will join you.”

“Please, Chilton had me cornered for nearly thirty minutes after a talk on The psychological affects of confrontation. Talk about irony.”

Its his turn to laugh under his breath “I shall rescue you momentarily dear Alana, not to worry”

They end the call with more polite goodbyes as Hannibal makes his way back to the hotel. With his new clothes on he calls a cab and directs the driver to the address on the business card the mechanic had given him.

The shabby auto parts garage is only twenty minutes away from the hotel, reaffirming Hannibal’s suspicion the rude alpha had him wait longer than necessary earlier in the day. The building itself is on a lot with a small one story house in one corner, surrounded by trees with only one road in and out. The pick up truck is parked near the garage doors. There are a dozen cars on the lot in varying stats of decay. Some with no wheels, no hood, no doors. Hannibal’s lip curls at the state of the place. He’s sure there are more decrepit cars further into the tree line but the sun is setting and the only lights are floods directed at the main garage and the light from the house.

He exits the cab to see his Bentley sitting on the gravel drive and the alpha leaning on it smoking a cigarette.

Hannibal stalks forward, straight backed and glaring.

“Like I said on the phone, “ the Alpha starts “I could’ve fixed the dings. But she’s running again, as yer wanted. Just needed a new starter.”

“Excellent” Hannibal retorts. “How much do I owe you?” He glances over his shoulder to see the cab firmly pulling away back down the isolated road.

“I only take cash” The mechanic demands.

“Of course” Hannibal looks around the lot for evidence of any one else. “This is a big lot, do you work alone?’

The alpha finishes his cigarette and stomps the butt out while nodding. “Yeah, yeah. I work for myself.”

Hannibal posits the alpha is only saying that as some kind of posturing. Big lone Alpha, doesn’t need anyone else to help him. It makes Hannibal smile slightly, the corner of his mouth ticking up.

“I keep my money in the house.” He says and starts walking towards the squat, dank house by the lot. “I’ll get you a receipt.”

Hannibal raises an eyebrow at the apparent professionalism, and follows behind, taking the screen door from the mechanic as he opens it to enter the house. It creaks then slams closed behind him as he enters the house proper.

The inside is as grubby as the outside and Hannibal is reassured they are definitely alone. No one would live like this with a partner or spouse. Beer bottles litter the floor, empty take out containers are stacked on almost every surface. The walls are damp, the plaster peeling. There is a distinct smell that Hannibal cant place. Under the mould and stale beer is a sweetness that subtly permeates the air. The mechanic has walked into the kitchen to the left of the main door and leaves Hannibal standing in an open lounge diner area. If it can be called that with all the mismatched broken furniture placed haphazardly in the room.

The smell of rotting food makes Hannibal want to gag but he is nothing if not able to control the action. He checks his watch to distract himself. As he looks down to his wrist he sees markings on the wall by the kitchen door. Blue lines, scratched and sweeping in long strokes. It's clearly been done by a child and Hannibal has a moment of apprehension that they actually aren’t alone. Another glance around the room puts his mind at rest as its the only evidence of another person. No toys, no children’s shoes by the door. There is the sound of a fridge door opening and closing.

The mechanic has helped himself to a beer apparently and is now rummaging in a desk drawer in the opposite corner of the room. Hannibal closes his eyes and gathers his other senses. This moment is his most sacred. The moment he allows the mask to slip, the veil to lift. He doesn't uncover his true alpha nature, no that's always suppressed with intelligence. He won't revert to being a beast led purely by gender. But its close. He feels the walls of the house close in, then expand with his breathing, as if the entire room around him as become a moving, living thing. He feels his pulse quicken ever so slightly, lets the excitement of the kill thrum through his veins. Behind his eyes he see the scene play out, pigs are almost always predictable when confronted by him. Wild eyes and squealing maws.

The noise of papers shifting has stopped and Hannibal opens his eyes again to see the mechanic eyeing him up and down. He can feel the change in the air. Hannibal tilts his head, maybe this fight won't be so boring after all.

The mechanic lunges first, thinking he'll gain an advantage landing the first strike, have the upper hand. He doesn't. Of course he doesn't. Hannibal almost laughs at the flimsy punch the mechanic throws, he side steps easily, letting the mechanic fall into the closed front door, growling in frustration. He grabs the mechanic by the hair, grimacing at the grease on his fingers, rips his head back and slams it into the door, dizzying the other alpha.

Hannibal moves gracefully further into the room putting some distance between them. The mechanic shakes his head and turns to Hannibal lunging again but this time adding some height by jumping forwards, using his weight.

Hannibal ducks this time and flings the mechanic over his shoulder, the man landing on his back with a loud thud. He wants to laugh, this fight is pathetic. Hannibal hasn't even broken a sweat as the man on his back on the floor wheezes out a curse then struggles to roll over and push himself up. This is not as entertaining as Hannibal wanted.

Hannibal has decided to end the game early and moves to take the scalpel from his pocket when he hears a faint gasp. A tiny intake of air that neither the mechanic, who is breathless and sweating, or himself made. The distraction created by the whisper means the mechanic has gained on Hannibal and lands a punch to his face, his head snaps back, his lip splitting. The mechanic laughs as Hannibal wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, inspecting the blood as he does. This has done it and Hannibal is putting a stop to this now.

He lashes out with the scalpel, drawing a scream from the mechanic as it opens up face, slicing through his cheek, widening his smile.

The mechanic falls to his knees clutching his ruined face and babbling about mercy. Hannibal listens as the mechanic tries to form words, blood bubbling from the new hole in his face.

He takes a deep breath and moves to stand behind the mechanic, tips his forehead back, reaches round and pulls the scalpel over his exposed throat. Blood sprays the room, the arterial vein sliced deeply, covering the dirty carpet, broken furniture and take out containers.

He lets the body fall to the floor and surveys the state of the room. Burning it down would be the only way to cover all the evidence of their fight and the murder. Hannibal cant see it as a loss. The pig was dead, setting up an ‘accidental’ fire wasn’t hard work. Honestly Hannibal is disappointed. The kill was too easy. He had hoped, with the size of the alpha he might have been a decent opponent. Hannibal didn’t mind messy kills if the fight was worth it. The well planned out removal of pigs ending in a tableau by the Chesapeake Ripper. Wild fights, alpha driven brutality was just a good way to let off steam. And after the rudeness of the mechanic, Hannibal had wanted a fight to get his blood pumping. Something archaic, alpha hormone driven destruction.

As Hannibal puts the cap back on the scalpel and returns it to his pocket he hears the tiny whisper again. He freezes, tilts his head and waits to hear it again. After a moment the sound repeats and is this time followed with a soft hum and a gentle thump. Then another hum and thump. This pattern continues and Hannibal follows the sound, on silent feet, to the kitchen door.

Peering round the door frame Hannibal sees no one until he drops his gaze to the floor and there, sitting amongst the trash, is a very dirty, very skinny child.

“Ah” he sighs.

The Basement

Hannibal has few rules he lives by. Morals he practiced. One is to eat the rude whenever possible. One is he never finds sexual release in his kills, the idea of abusing another like that makes him feel ill. And another is he doesn't kill children. He takes a deep breath in, holds it for four, then releases it.

The grimy humming child at his feet hasn't moved since Hannibal walked into the kitchen. He rocks back and forth, swaying backwards until his spine hits what looks like a doggy door in an internal door. The doggy door looks locked and doesn't open, if it did the boy would fall through, possibly to the basement stairs or pantry. He looks no more than five years old. Naked except for a stained baggy t-shirt, it's possibly an adult size, if he were to stand, the hem would reach his knees. His hair is long and matted. He doesn't have any obvious injuries, but the dirt could be covering anything.

Hannibal's brain, normally running five trains of thought at a time seems to have short circuited. He stares at the child, completely at a loss what to do. If he leaves the child behind he could tell someone what he saw, ie Hannibal slashing open the mechanic's neck. If he takes him with him, if he takes him? What is he going to do with a child? He cant kill him. Hannibal will not make a child suffer. Will never take a child's life.

As Hannibal bends at the knees, squatting beside the boy, meaning to speak to him, the boy suddenly lets out a high pitched squeak, flips around frantically and starts scrabbling at the doggy door, scratching at it while whimpering.

"Its locked."

The sound of Hannibal's voice makes the child panic more and he doubles his attempts at getting through the door. Racking his dirty hands and nails over the plastic flap. The sound of the boys distress is like nails down a chalk board for Hannibal, his ribs shrink and a stone forms in the pit of his stomach. He doesn't like it. It's primal, it's supposed to make Alphas take care of their pups. But Hannibal is no normal Alpha and this urchin is not Hannibal's pup.

In an attempt to calm the creature Hannibal reaches over his matted head of hair and flips the lock on the corner of the door. The flap instantly opens and the boy topples through, Hannibal can hear him making his way down wooden creaking stairs. This door leads to the basement then.

The flap closes again and brings with it a soft brush of air that contains the same sweetness Hannibal smelled earlier. It stirs something inside Hannibal's blood as he stands and pulls open the basement door. The sweetness is suddenly over run with the smell of damp wood, mould, and blood. It's overwhelming for a moment and Hannibal covers his nose and mouth with his sleeve as he descends the stairs. The basement is dark, the only light coming from the open basement door and kitchen light. Hannibal can make out vague shapes in the darkness. More of the broken furniture similar to upstairs and a furnace. His retrieves his phone from his pocket, turns on the torch and sweeps in around the room, searching for the boy. Unlike the floors in the main living area, there are no beer bottles down here, no empty food cartons. Just dirt, damp patches of concrete. As he moves the torch light over a dusty work bench he hears a hiss and sees the top of the boys head dart back into the darkness.

He follows the movement to a lump on the floor where the boy ducks down again growling. Hannibal takes a step closer and can sees the lump is actually a mattress. A mattress with a body on it.

Annoyed at the lack of light Hannibal turns and searches the stairs and wall for a light switch. He finds it halfway back up the stairs, and switches it on. The light isn't overly bright but it's enough that he can turn his phone torch off. He returns to the basement and where the boy is cowering behind the blanket covered body. Blanket is an over statement, it's more like a scrap of fabric, with holes and blood stains. The body under it is laying awkwardly, one arm sticking up, wrist chained to the wall behind the mattress. There is a feeling of fury at the scene appearing before him. Something that touches a memory deep down inside his body, a memory of skinny shaking limbs, cold hands wrapped in his own equally cold hands. The sound of his name whispered in the darkness.

Hannibal crouches to inspect the body, pulling the sheet off it slightly. It has been recently beaten, there are bruises and blood over his torso. Fresh cuts to the tops of his arms, the wrist chained to the wall has abrasion damage from friction from the cuff. He is as dirty as the boy shaking beside him, and smells just as bad. Hannibal is mentally calculating time of death when the body suddenly takes in a shuddering breath and reaches for the boy hiding tucked up to his side sucking his thumb.

Hannibal falls back on his butt at the movement. Not a body then, a man. The wheels all click together and Hannibal realizes this man is an omega, this boy is his pup. The Alpha now dead in his lounge was his owner.

Human trafficking is no secret. Omega trafficking is a highly profitable enterprise. While Hannibal would never partake in the horrific scheme he knows it exists, is well aware of the price some omegas can fetch. He's surprised the mechanic could afford to buy an omega on the black market. But maybe he came with the pup and was considered damaged goods.

Hannibal gathers himself and stands. Now he has two witnesses. Although the omega on the mattress is still unconscious, he will at some point wake up. The child will tell him what he saw. The child has seen Hannibal's face, even if the omega hasn't yet. It's a mess Hannibal really doesn't want. He cant bring them with him. He cant leave them here to tell authorities what they have seen. With the omega in the basement with his pup he cant burn down the house destroying the crime scene.

He feels the faint thrum of annoyance beginning in his blood again. This whole trip has been one disaster after another. And not to be petulant but Hannibal just wants to go home. Recoup. Reassess. Give himself time to think about his predicament.

Mind made up that they both have to come with him, his own basement with a suitable room already available, he steps once more towards the boy next to his mother. The child is growling. The noise intensifies as Hannibal reaches over the omegas side and grabs the child by the top of his arm. Quicker than Hannibal was prepared for the tiny brat turns his face to Hannibal's arm and sinks his teeth in the sensitive flesh. Hannibal drops the boys arm but the feral beast doesn't open his mouth and is now hanging from the alpha's arm by his small sharp teeth. Hannibal gives a loud yell at the sudden intense pain and shakes his arm trying to detach the boy gripping it like a dog with a toy.

"STOP." He shouts and the creature opens his mouth and falls back into the mattress with the sleeping omega. Hannibal growls and the basement falls silent. The boy no longer growling or hissing. Hannibal rolls up his shirt sleeve and inspects the wound, it's not deep, his main worry being whatever diseases the imp might have. He doesn't have the supplies to clean the wound here and resigns himself that he'll have to wait and do it at home.

Annoyed at himself for not thinking of it sooner, the easiest way to move a pup is to move the omega. The pup will follow along like a mother duck with her ducklings.

But said mother duck is currently chained to the basement wall. Hannibal touches the chain and gives it a tug. It doesn't move, its firmly fastened to the bricks. He stands and makes to leave the basement. The growling beside the omega starts again, the small cub once more huddled next his mother.

"I'm not going to touch you again silly boy. I've leant my lesson." He smoothes down his rumpled shirt front, abased.

He ascends the basement stairs and goes in search of some bolt cutters.

Flames and a shower

Chapter Notes

Thanks to everyone who has given kudos and left a comment.
It helps fend off all my self doubt and makes me do the happy dance.
again not beta read, all the oopsies are my own.

As Hannibal exits the basement his eye catches a set of keys hanging by the basement door. There are 6 keys on a ring and a keyring that looks like a mouse. He takes them and puts them in his pocket, its possible one is for the padlock chaining the omega to the wall but he doesn't want to waste any more of his time going up and down the stairs and still leaves the building to look for a bolt cutter.

He finds one in the main garage amongst the other workshop paraphernalia and more empty beer bottles. And returns swiftly to the basement with a blanket he finds on the back of a broken sofa in the main room. It's dirty but it'll have to do.

Once he's back in the basement he gets to work with the set of keys, trying each one on the padlock on the chain around the omegas wrist. The third one does the trick and the omegas chaffed bruised limb falls back onto the mattress with a small grunt from the omega. He waits a moment for the man to wake but he stays silent and still.

The dirty boy is no where to be seen but Hannibal isn't worried. The pup is still in the house, Hannibal can smell him. He wraps the blanket around the omegas body and lifts him from the mattress. He is so light Hannibal barely feels him in his arms. The man doesn't wake as he carries him up the stairs but he can hear a small scuffle behind him as the boy follows behind.

Once at the car, he places the omega across the back seat and secures him awkwardly with the seatbelt. Hannibal sighs knowing the dirt from the man's body will transfer onto the white leather seats, but he will have to get the car fixed properly anyway, a good clean wouldn't go amiss either.

Now Hannibal waits. He can hear the pup in the house, scurrying about. Bumping into things in his distress that his mother has been taken. The monotone humming has started again and after fifteen minutes Hannibal strides back to the house and opens the screen door, propping it open with a nearby brick and opens the front door using a broken table leg to hold that one open too then stands back. The car door is open where the omega is sleeping, and can be seen from the now open doors.

Hannibal steps back out of the line of sight.

“I am taking your mother,” he calls “if you want to be with him, I suggest you get in the car.”

There is a long pause. Then suddenly, moving quicker than Hannibal expected, the pup bursts from the house, all knees and dirty hair and leaps into the car and clings to his mothers sleeping body.

Hannibal chuckles under his breath. He closes the car door and sets about lighting the house and garage on fire to destroy the evidence of his kill.

It takes longer than he wanted but the job had to be thorough. Gasoline stored in the garage, the broken furniture and the already dilapidated building all do an excellent job of wiping Hannibal’s presence from the scene. He gets back into the car smelling of ash. The engine, thankfully, starts. The mechanic having fixed it like he said. Small mercies Hannibal thinks.

As he's pulling onto the small dirt road away from the flames, he looks in his rearview mirror to see the pup looking out of the back window, he cant see his face but his body language looks almost relieved and Hannibal feels a tiny distant pang of regret. It’s gone in a millisecond but Hannibal is aware it existed even briefly. Regret of what, he cant say for sure. But the saying ‘Out of the frying pan into the fire’ pops into his mind, the omega and his pup have escaped one hell but what hell awaits them in Hannibal’s basement?

Hannibal will not shy away from violence to achieve the omega’s silence. And while he won’t hurt the boy he’s not above hurting the man to get what he needs. But he won’t take casual pleasure in hurting the omega, there will be no beatings just for the sake of it. Hannibal is and always will be a creature of purpose. He sets the game, he controls the pieces on the board.

The man asleep on his back seat, the pup still clinging to his body, are an anomaly yes. But Hannibal is more than capable of twisting their fate to suit his own needs. Hannibal will recalculate, finding amusement in the night proceedings, the unpredictability of life having always filled Hannibal with a sense of whimsy.

The drive back to Baltimore is uneventful. Hannibal lets the radio play quietly, mostly to drone out the monotone rhythmic gentle hum coming from the back seat. Clearly the boy is trying to self soothe. Hannibal won't stop him.

When they pull onto the driveway to Hannibal's home, he opens the garage door by remote and moves into the space. He doesn't open the car door until the garage door is closed behind them. He steps out leaving his passengers in the back seat and goes into the house, taps in the code to the basement door and descends.

There is a room to the back of the basement Hannibal sometimes puts his captives when he doesn't kill them outright. Abel Gideon spent a month living in this space after trying to abduct Hannibal in his own car at a crime scene. The man having escaped police custody, kidnapped an associate of Hannibal, a hack psychiatrist called Frederick Chilton. He had alerted Chilton's location to the head of the FBI via a telephone call then sat back and waited for them to appear. When Hannibal had been told to stay in the car he had acquiesced. The drama unfolding through his windscreen. Then his back door had opened and Abel brandished a gun, poked it at Hannibal's head and told him to drive and Hannibal did. Half way to whatever destination Abel had requested, Hannibal had pulled over, taken Abel's gun and subdued the man in the back seat. What an interesting month that had been, taking apart Abel's body and mind bit by bit.

Now the room was empty save for a small single bed, table and a lamp. Naturally the room has an ensuite, nothing fancy, just a bath and toilet. But compared to the squalor they have been living in, he believes the omega and pup will be quite comfortable. Not that their comfort is a priority of course.

Hannibal comes back to the car and opens the rear door. The pup who has been calm for most of the journey now starts to growl while clutching to his mothers chest, his small legs wrapped around his waist. Hannibal's sees no other choice but to lift them both from the back seat. The added weight of the boy is minimal, he's just as malnourished as his mother.

The tiny pup growls the entire time he's carried down the stairs and onto the bed where Hannibal lays the omega down. He doesn't stop when Hannibal straightens himself or as he leaves the room.

Hannibal checks his watch as he heads to the kitchen, it's now after 1am. He's tired and filthy. He wants a glass of wine, something to eat, a shower and to sleep. He decides on the shower first. He won't eat anything prepared near his dirty clothing and skin.

His shower is brief but heavenly. The scum of the mechanics house swirling down the drain. The smell of gasoline and smoke washed away with the expensive shampoo and body wash. Hannibal is meticulous, scrubbing under his fingernails, all the creases of his skin. And when he emerges from the steam of the bathroom he feels slightly less aggrieved by the days activities. Some good food and wine will help.

He prepares a very simple dinner of cold meats and cheese. With homemade bread, toasted and dressed with simple olive oil. And pairs it with an Anjou Blanc.

He reheats a soup he made earlier in the week for his guests downstairs and pours it into a bowl with more of his home made bread and puts it on a tray with two glasses of water. If more water is required he reasons the omega can refill the glasses from the tap in the bathroom.

He punches in the code for the basement door again and makes his way down balancing the tray and its contents with effortless agility.

It's silent when he opens the door to the basement room, the pup has finally fallen asleep beside the omega. Hannibal places the tray on the small table and turns on the lamp, dimly illuminating the room. He notices the pup has his thumb in his mouth again. The omega has turned on his side and is holding the boy to his body. It's a sad and beautiful sight and once again Hannibal feels that distant press of regret pushing at his ribs. Curious.

He exits the room, the lock snapping shut behind him and ascends to the house ready to sleep off the exhaustion that suddenly fills his bones.

Losing Focus.

Chapter Notes

Bit of a longer chapter this time.
Thank you for the kudos and comments!

Hannibal's alarm goes off at 6am sharp. He wakes as he normally does, refreshed and ready for his day. He showers, dresses, combs his hair, chooses his tie and pocket square. When he enters the kitchen he puts on the coffee maker, sets a pan on the stove and makes his breakfast. All routine. All predictable. A creature of habit and comfort.

Today has one variable though. The omega and pup in his basement. He already dislikes the idea of caring for another person, if he liked it he would've taken a partner by now and settled down. No, other people in his personal space make his life complicated. And he's frustrated with himself that he hasn't quite decided what to do with this current complications.

He prepares porridge for both of his guests, fresh orange juice and more water. He takes his medical bag from under the stairs in the hall and types in the code for the basement door.

As he descends he can hear a muffled voice. It is deep and rough but saying gentle words Hannibal can't make out. The omega has awoken then. He approaches the door and uses the spy hole to see where the man and his pup are. He can see they're both on the bed, the omega sitting up, the pup on his lap, his face tucked under the omegas chin, his thumb in his mouth. The man has his hands around the boy, stroking up and down his back soothingly. They're both trembling, the man's hand is shaking as its travels up and down the pup's back.

Hannibal unlocks and opens the door, steps inside and closes the door behind him.

The room smells of fear, distress and sweat. He tries not to breathe too deeply. The deep seated need in him to comfort the omega. He can smell the infection on the omegas wrist, possibly somewhere else too considering its potency.

“Good morning, I see you have finally awoken.” Hannibal addresses the man on the bed.

Cerulean eyes meet his for a fraction of a second then the omega looks away.

“I have brought you breakfast. Not my usual fare but filling. Please eat, you need your strength. If you feel amenable I would like to check your wounds and dress them before I leave for work.” Hannibal steps forward and the omega flinches back, his breath catching in his throat. His arms wrapping tighter around the boy. “What is your name so I may address you properly?”

The omega opens his mouth to answer then closes it again. Hannibal can understand his apprehension. Names have power. To reveal a name is to allow someone into your world, to give them access to your identity. The omega seems to be weighing the pros and cons of letting Hannibal in when he finally decides to speak.

“Will.” It comes out hoarse, his voice strained. The bruising around his throat fresh enough to cause discomfort.

“My name is Dr Lecter, Will.” The omegas eyes flick up and meet Hannibal’s again briefly. They’re truly a unique color, dark in the lamplight, flecks of gold and green amongst a sea of stormy blue. He looks away almost immediately.

“Did you buy me?”

Me. Not us, Hannibal notes. “Not quite.” The knowledge that Hannibal killed the mechanic, Will’s last owner, going unsaid. It doesn’t have to be, any omega sold on the black market knows how dangerous the alphas buying them are. Omegas are either bought, or killed by another Alpha for them.

The omega nods. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath, the release comes out shaky. He rests his head back against the wall and if Hannibal was not mistaken, he looks relieved.

“I really am on a tight schedule, and hate to be late, so I must insist I treat you now or you’ll have to wait for me to return later.”

Will flinches back again when Hannibal takes another step towards him. Hannibal purses his

lips and sighs. He really doesn't have the patience this morning, perhaps he didn't get enough sleep, or the smell of distressed omega is affecting him more than he thought.

"Very well," he says "There is enough on the tray for you both. Feel free to bathe, there are clean towels. I'm afraid I don't have anything clean for you both to wear, I shall shop on my way back later. What age is the boy?"

The omega sits up straighter, his brow furrowed in confusion. "Five" he whispers. His hand reaching to stroke the boys hair, matted and dirty for now.

Hannibal nods, he knows the man isn't looking at him but doesn't verbalize his reaction. Instead he turns, unlocks the door and leaves the room taking the medical bag with him and placing in by the door outside the room.

_____

Hannibal's morning and early afternoon are normal. Patients come and go, they talk about their lives, he listens. Nothing out of the ordinary, except Hannibal can't quite focus. Of course he appears completely attentive, the mask fixed in place. But there in the back of his mind are Will and the pup, whose name wasn't given but wasn't asked for either. At 3.30pm his last patient leaves and Hannibal packs up his office for the day. On his way home he detours and shops for clothing for Will and the child.

His normal choice of clothing for himself won't work for Will. So he settles on a generic brand store and purchases a few pairs of sweat pants and plain t-shirts for Will. Adding in underwear and socks too. For the child he does the same, although the children's section has clothing with cartoon prints on them he decides against it, it's quite possible the child has no idea who the strange characters are. He settles on plain but bright t-shirts and sweat pants, underwear and socks. Neither Will or the boy need shoes, he has no intention of letting them outside for the time being.

Once he returns home he doesn't go immediately to the basement. Instead he heads to his study to copy out patient notes he took in his sessions. He does this after every working day and finds it soothing, a good way to bookend his time with his patients. He goes to the kitchen to make dinner, another simple dish for himself and Will. And the boy. He makes a light stew with potatoes and seasonal vegetables. The meat is pieces of thigh from a rude waitress who refused to take back a meal prepared incorrectly.

He gathers the bags from the hall containing the new clothes for his guests, puts their meals on a tray along with more juice and goes downstairs.

He takes a glance through the spy hole in the door, Will and his son are sitting on the bed again, wrapped together in the blanket. He enters quietly, closing the door firmly behind him.

Will sits straighter as he approaches and takes the bag of clothes offered to him by Hannibal.

Hannibal can see they have both taken a bath. The boys dark ringlets are still damp, his skin pink. Will's pale skin contrasting with similar dark ringlets like the pup. Hannibal is grateful the smell of them both has dissipated, although it still lingers from the bathroom where Hannibal presumes their dirty clothes still lay.

With his skin now clean, Hannibal can see the extent of injuries on Will's face, neck, shoulders and arms. Theres nothing he can do about the bruising but there is a nasty burn on Will's shoulder that will need attending too. The lacerations on the tops of his arms aren't as deep as he previously thought so won't need stitching, the scabbing already holding the skin shut. He will need to check Will more fully though once he has eaten.

Will has put the bag of clothes beside him on the bed and pulled out sweat pants and t-shirt for the pup. The boy allows a t-shirt to be put on him but starts squirming as Will tries to pull the sweat pants over the boys feet.

Hannibal stands back and watches the scene with his hands clasped behind his back. Apparently the pup doesn't like clothing, he wonders if they have ever been provided for before him and has a small Alpha preen at being the one to do it for the first time. The feeling surprises him and he suppresses it before it can affect his scent.

Will's eyes flick nervously up at the alpha "Sorry, he's not used to clothes" he tries again to put the sweat pants over the boys toes, succeeding with one but not the other. The pup starts to hum in monotone again, the rhythmic humming sound, pushing at his mothers hands.

"Maybe after he's eaten he'll be more amenable?" Hannibal suggests.

Will nods and removes the only pant leg that made it over the pups foot. The boy squeals in success and nuzzles his mothers face. “Ok baby, you hungry?” The pup doesn’t respond.

Will tucks the blanket around his waist and stands up, wobbling slightly. He doesn’t move towards the tray on the table, just shifts awkwardly from foot to foot.

Hannibal can sense he’s waiting for him to move away and takes the opportunity to gather the dirty clothes from the bathroom. When he returns both of the bowls of stew have been taken from the tray and Will is sitting beside the boy holding a bowl for him so he can drink. He watches as Will takes a piece of the meat from the bowl and holds it up to the boys lips for him to bite. The pup shakes his head and refuses and Will puts the meat in his own mouth instead. Hannibal’s mind stutters at the image. Long forgotten memories surface briefly of his own hand holding meat to the lips of a loved one. Their pouting mouth opening gently to take the offered portion. He drops the soiled clothing by the door with a growl, Will nearly drops the bowl.

“I provided cutlery.” He states.

“I.. sorry” Will stutters and picks up the spoon beside him on the bed. “This is good stew, thank you” he says quietly resuming feeding the pup beside him.

Hannibal doesn’t reply.

They finish their meals, Will gulping his down in big swallows and places both bowls on the floor. He tries again to put the sweat pants on the pup and surprisingly succeeds this time while the boy is distracted playing with the spoon.

“I would like to see to your wounds now.” Hannibal says as he moves towards Will again, his medical bag once again in his hand. Will nods, looking at the floor. “Sit on the edge of the bed please” he pulls blue sterile gloves from the bag and puts them on.

Will, still wrapped in the blanket does as he’s asked, gingerly scooting forwards until his feet are on the floor. The smell of stressed omega fills the air and the pup now sitting on the floor with the spoon, whimpers.

“Its ok baby” Will assures the pup, stroking over his hair. His hands shake as he lets the blanket go.

Hannibal sits beside him on the bed and starts at Will’s shoulder, gently touching the burn. Will has his faced turned away, refusing eye contact. He flinches with a hiss. “This will need some ointment.” Hannibal says palpating the skin. He takes a small tube out of his medical bag and applies the thin layer of ointment to the large burn, it covers the entirety of Will’s left shoulder.

He reaches the healing slashes on Will’s upper arm, lifting and turning it to see the wounds in full. There are fresh ones and some more healed. “How were these done?” He asks.

Will sighs quietly. He doesn’t flinch as Hannibal touches the cuts. “He would walk by me with a knife, cut me as he passed.”

Hannibal hums. His hands move to the bruising on Will’s chest, touching each rib gently. Will holds his breath, the pain evident. Though they are only bruised Hannibal can feel that there have been previous breaks. He moves Will so his back is facing him, gently manipulating his shoulders until he turns and is taken aback by what he sees. Will’s back is an anthology of abuse. Scars litter his skin from neck to hips. Burn marks, slashes, what looks like cigarette burns collect over his right ribcage. Not an inch of skin is unblemished. Will sits shivering under Hannibal’s scrutiny. Hannibal ghosts his hand down Will’s spine, barely touching him. “You have suffered greatly.” He sighs. Will doesn’t answer him. His scent shifts, distress has become fear and anticipation. Will is waiting to be hurt.

Hannibal turns Will’s shoulder again until he’s facing forward and lifts his arm, inspecting the infected wound on his wrist. Will hisses but doesn’t pull away, doesn’t dare too. Hannibal reaches into the bag and takes out an assortment of gauze, bandages, a bottle of clear fluid.

“This will hurt” he informs Will and begins to clean the wound. Will makes a quiet noise in the back of his throat, a choking sound but doesn’t cry out. Hannibal can see sweat begin to gather on his brow and silently commends him for keeping quiet. He supposes Will is used to keeping quiet. The pup on the floor whimpers again and turns to Will’s leg to nuzzle him. He strokes the boys head again “It’s ok pup, I’m ok” he says through a clenched jaw.

Hannibal finishes by wrapping the bandage around Will’s wrist a few times, tapping it into place. “Do you have any wounds anywhere else Will?” he asks.

Will pauses stroking his pups head. He looks like he's debating revealing more of his body to Hannibal's scrutiny and nods once, a jerky unsure movement.

He lifts the blanket over his left leg showing the gash on his thigh. The blanket gripped firmly in Will's hand, protecting his decency. The laceration looks jagged, rough at the edges. It appears to have been done with a saw tooth blade. It's not deep but does need cleaning. Around the wound are similar scars, raised, angry things. Hannibal repeats the same process he did for Will's wrist. Will takes deep breaths throughout. The pup at his feet offering his own version of comfort, nuzzling his mothers leg.

The wound now clean and dressed with a sterile gauze and tape, Hannibal replaces the items in his bag and pulls off his glove while holding the dirty gauze, turning it inside out into a makeshift bag. This he also puts in the bag.

Hannibal rises and moves to stand directly in front of Will, he reaches down and tucks his finger under Will's chin and tips his head back to see his face in full. Will stops breathing, he can't make eye contact but that's not what Hannibal is after, he turns Will's face to look at the bruising over his right cheekbone and forehead. He touches the bruise carefully, pushing on the outside edge of Will's eye socket. The bone isn't broken. From here he can see the faint scaring on Will's face, the long scar across his forehead, the scar running from his cheek to the corner of his lip. Hannibal pushes Will's chin down with his thumb and forefinger forcing his mouth open. The omega does as physically instructed and opens his mouth wide. He knows this move, got to check for broken teeth so the omega won't cut a cock on his chipped molars. Will pulls his chin from Hannibal's grasp with a low growl then braces himself for a slap or punch to his face.

Hannibal does neither. He straightens and picks up his medical bag and moves to the door.

Before he opens it he say's "The pup. Does he have any injuries?"

Will closes his eyes and shakes his head.

"And his name?"

"Adam" Will whispers.

Breathtaking.

Chapter Notes

Sorry in the delay in posting this chapter. Turns out I had to do grown up shit, like work, and clean my home. Urgh.
Thanks again for the awesome comments and kudos, theyre like a little blankie on a cold night of self doubt.

The next three days started and ended the same as the first day. Hannibal rose from his bed, got himself ready for work, created a simple breakfast for Will and Adam, made a more complex one for himself and ate it in the kitchen. He then delivered the food downstairs to the basement room. He had added an antibiotic pill to the tray to help Will fight off the infection of the skin on his wrist. When he collected the tray in the evening the pill was gone. If Will took it he didn't know but it was in his best interest. He went to work, listened to his patients. When he came home he wrote out his patient notes, enjoyed a glass of wine. He made himself a beautiful dinner, Will and Adam a more simple one and delivered that dinner to the basement room. As inconvenient as it was to have the omega and his pup in the house, their presence was minimal. Their interactions brief.

On the evening of the forth day the basement room was louder than normal. The sound of a distressed child and the voice of a worried parent filled the room. Hannibal placed the tray containing their simple dinner on the table outside of the room and looked through the spy hole.

On the floor was a writhing rocking Adam, his hands in his hair pulling on the curls, his face scrunched up and red. He was crying out, frustrated noises coming out of his small mouth.

Will was sitting in front of him, his legs crossed, his hands in his lap. He was talking to Adam in a calm but forceful voice. He was repeating 'its ok baby' and 'I'm here Adam, don't worry, I'm here.' Trying to calm his own panicked breaths. The distress was evident on Will's face, he kept glancing at the door, knowing Hannibal was due any moment.

As the key turned in the lock Will jumped to his feet between Hannibal and Adam.

“I’m sorry, he doesn’t mean it, he’ll be quiet soon!” Will’s voice was pitched higher in his panic. “I’m sorry I’m sorry, Please!” His hands raised, palms out.

Hannibal said nothing and placed the food tray on the table in the corner of the room. He looked around Will to the boy on the floor. Adam had become louder as Hannibal had entered the room, the smell of an alpha pushing the boy further into his despair. He had quickened his rocking back and forth.

Hannibal, never a man to raise his voice as shouting is crude, stepped closer to Will causing the man to shrink into himself, his shoulders folding, his head hung low. Will clenched his fists and his jaw but did not take a step back. Hannibal was impressed by his courage, however futile it might be.

“Why is he doing it?” He asked

“I.. I.. “ stuttered Will, his eyes dancing around their sockets, his brow furrowed “He can’t help it.”

“Yes I gathered that. It looks like he’s having a meltdown, a reaction to a miscommunication perhaps.”

“N..no, no.” Will said, his head still hanging. He looked terrified. His slight frame shaking, his hands clenching and unclenching. “He’s bored” he whispered.

“Say it again Will, I didn’t hear you.” Hannibal pushed. To say the squirming man in front of him wasn’t alluring to Hannibal would be a lie. He was flooded with Omega pheromones trying to placate the Alpha. It added a thick sweetness to the air between them and made Hannibal take a deep breath through his nose. There was nothing quite like the smell of an omega in distress.

Will noticed the action and took another step back closer to Adam. “Where we were before, Adam would find things to do, he w..w.. would leave the basement, come back with pens, paper. Sometimes wood or plastic things to play with…”

Hannibal tilted his head in consideration. He wanted the noise to stop but didn't believe in appeasing an ill tempered pup. Hannibal was raised to believe good behavior was rewarded, bad behavior was punished. His father having taken his belt to Hannibal's backside on more than one occasion in his youth.

Hannibal eyed the boy on the floor. And once again Will shifted to shield Adam from Hannibal's line of sight. "Please, I'm sorry. He's scared. He's always so scared." Will let out a small whine from the back of his throat. A pitiful attempt at appeasing an alpha. Or maybe in this case, a sound of despair from the wretched, skinny Omega before him. Will was shaking like a leaf in a storm, his thin body shuddering from head to toe under the clothing Hannibal had provided.

Hannibal straightened up, drawing his shoulders back and smoothing down his waistcoat and shirt. He had taken off his jacket to make dinner. He looked about the room briefly then left, the door clicking shut behind him. He could hear Will try and calm the pup again, begging him to please be quiet. As he ascended the stairs he contemplated what he could provide a troubled bored pup for entertainment. And did he want to provide stimulus for a pup he didn't care for. He sighed as he entered his study, scanning the room for suitable items. His gaze landed on an unused set of oil pastels he had purchased on a whim and decided he didn't like the quality of. Fine. The pup can have them. He grabbed an empty sketch pad from the bottom drawer of his desk, the pastels and two drawing pencils from the pot on the shelf.

As he turned to leave the room he realized that Will must also be bored. He hadn't had time nor the inclination to look fully around the basement he had been found in. Tucked into a box or corner could have been a book or two Will might have read. He walked to his book shelves and glanced at the titles. Medical text books, Greek Mythology, Goethe, Nietzsche, A History of Botticelli. He immediately decided against any cookery books. He took a copy of E M Forster's '*A Passage to India*' from its place on the shelf. It wasn't a rare copy, not particularly precious to Hannibal, it would do.

Entering the basement he realized the noise the pup had been making had stopped. He opened the door and saw the boy was now asleep on the bed in the corner. Will was perched on the edge of the bed, stroking the pups unruly waves.

He stood up as Hannibal entered the room, still on alert. "I'm sorry" he said quietly "He does stop eventually. Wears himself out." He gestured to the table with the now cold meal on it. "We'll eat that when he wakes up."

Hannibal nodded once and held out the drawing supplies and book to Will. They weren't taken from him, Will just shifted awkwardly from foot to foot, his eyes looking to the ground, back up to Hannibal's hand, then down again. Like a skittish animal scared of being captured.

"Take them Will." Hannibal said as he took a closer step to the omega.

Will looked at Hannibal's outstretched hand again. His own hands coming up to tentatively take the offered items. When they left Hannibal's hand Will braced himself as though expecting a slap or punch to befall him. His shoulders tensed, his head turned to the side. He sucked in a sharp breath then held it. It was decidedly submissive.

Hannibal observed the pensive furrow on Will's brow. "The book is for you Will. The art supplies for Adam. You may use then too." He stepped minutely closer to Will.

Will's breath shuddered out of him, his shoulders curling closer to his body. He was expecting Hannibal to hurt him, that he would strike him for accepting a gift. Hannibal's stoic mask slipped briefly as he sneered at the thought of hurting someone just for taking what was offered. Hannibal didn't give gifts superfluously. They were either given in kindness, although not often the reason, or gifts were given to help the receiver believe Hannibal was a good man, someone they could trust. Will's suspicion of Hannibal was deeper than Hannibal had foreseen. Yes he was locked in the basement room but Hannibal had treated his wounds, he had fed the omega and his pup, given antibiotics for an infection. For Will to presume Hannibal would hit him over nothing than what Hannibal was offering was an insult. For him to presume he was anything like the pig alphas who Will had been owned by was disgusting.

Will's breath quickened in the resuming silence. But he stood his ground. Brave foolish Omega.

"How many Alphas have you had Will?"

Will lifted his face, his eyes snapping briefly to meet Hannibal's then flinching away "Wha.. what?"

"The alphas who owned you Will, how many have there been?"

"You want to know how used I am?" Will growled.

Hannibal stepped into Will's space again, closer than before, trapping Will between himself and the bed. The aroma of distressed Omega began to waft between them again, Adam whimpered in his sleep. "No Will. How many Alphas?"

“6” Will whispered.

“I am nothing like them.” Hannibal stated.

Will made eye contact again just for a second. A second of azure sea blue, his pupils swallowing most of the color in his fear. He looked down at the floor again, his curls falling over his forehead.

“Do not ever compare me to them again Will” Hannibal snarled.

Will shook his head “no, no I promise” Will breathed.

Hannibal didn’t move. He just allowed his presence before the omega to make his point, looming over him. He realized that if Will were to straighten his back, square his shoulders, there wouldn’t be that much difference in their height. Body mass yes, Hannibal was broader, his muscle mass larger. As was normal for Alphas of his pedigree. But Will might have the potential to be quite powerful, if he wanted.

On a whim he asked “Did you kill any of these Alphas Will?”

Will sucked in a shocked breath and paled. His skin becoming alabaster white, his shoulders drawing up to his ears. Hannibal could see his eyes widen behind the curls and furrow of his brow. “I.. there was..”

Before Will could continue Hannibal had swiftly turned on his heel and exited the room. Closed the door behind him and locked it again. He didn’t realize he was holding his breath until black spots appeared in the corners of his vision as he pressed himself to the basement door in the kitchen. He had expected the Omega to deny it, to cry and wail that he would never, could never kill. The man’s answer had flooded Hannibal’s mind with beautiful, grotesque imagery. Will covered in blood, his mouth crying out his victory, his hands shaped into claws dripping with flesh torn from an unworthy alphas body. Breathtaking.

It seems they had both underestimated each other then.

Graham

Chapter Notes

sorry for the wait again. life, kids, job, stuff.

Thank you for the kudos and comments.
You're all beautiful. As beautiful as a red velvet suit and a whittled shark.

After failing to attend the conference Alana Bloom had called Hannibal to set up a lunch date. He happily agreed, enjoying the betas company more than most. She was useful to help cultivate his mask, her easy going personality was simple to reflect back at her. Mirroring her humanity was a useful tool, sometimes she was too sentimental, he struggled to understand her piety to her patients but mostly she was intelligent, insightful and pleasant company.

She arrived at 12pm sharp to his office, always politely on time. He opened the door with a small flourish and bow.

“Hello Alana”

She let out a small giggle and entered the room, nodding her head to him slightly. He took her coat and hung it on the hooks behind the door and went to his desk. On it lay tupperware filled with pasta, a fresh salad of tomato and mozzarella. Bread and butter. And water infused with cucumber and lime. He had placed a chair on the opposite side he sat on and Alana took the offered seat. She smiled at the offering.

“How have you been Alana?” He asked as he sat down, opening the boxes and placing one in front of her.

She smiled and lifted the tub to her nose, inhaling the fragrant scent of the cooked pasta, still warm. “I’ve taken on another patient at Port Haven. She’s very troubled. But resilient” a small frown appearing on her face.

“Is this the Hobbs girl? She has faced unbelievable odds. And she is in good hands.”

Alana blushed lightly, the pinking of her cheeks is charming, and Hannibal mouth quirks up at her response. Abigail Hobbs had been at the centre of some media coverage after she survived her fathers attack. The Alpha had killed her mother in front of her and tried to kill her when the FBI had investigated him for a series of killings. Alana had mentioned she was part of the investigation. It was inevitable to Hannibal that the girl would end up in Alanas care, she did love a lost stray.

They eat quietly for a few moments when Alana speaks again.

“Did you get your car sorted? It was a shame you couldn’t make the conference.”

“Thank you, yes it’s all fixed. It was unfortunate I missed the conference. Did you manage to escape Chilton?”

Alana laughs, its a lovely sound. “Yes, eventually. He had some choice things to say about the Key Notes speaker.” Her face taking on a more serious expression. Hannibal mirrored her frown.

“Dr Wes?”

“Yes” she nods “Chilton has always had such poor ideas of Omegas. Dr Wes is an expert in their field. Their second gender is inconsequential.”

“Dr Chilton has allowed his lack of second gender to make him bitter towards his fellow psychologists. He always did want to be an alpha. I believe he still uses a cologne designed with alpha pheromones in mind.”

“Oh doesn’t he just. It really was an attack on the senses” They share a small chuckle together. “Talking of pheromones, and please don't think me rude, but do I detect an omega in your life?, their scent is very subtle, but it's there.” She looks up at him across the table, her eyes shining with mischief.

When Hannibal clears his throat she knows she was right and lets out a small sigh. It doesn't quite sound like disappointment, its close though. Hannibal is very attractive.

Hannibal places his fork down and wipes his mouth with his napkin. "I have met a very interesting young man. But there is no attraction. He is a patient."

Alana looks embarrassed and takes a sip of her water. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to presume. You've been single for as long as I've known you." She narrows her eyes, the mirth playing on her lips. "Well, not dating at least."

Hannibal's eyes crinkle at the edges, a smile without his mouth "not dating, no"

There had been moments over the last few years, where the possibility of a physical relationship between them might happen. All were shut down by Alana. Being a beta she knew she would not fulfill Hannibal's need for an omega. Relationships between betas and alphas, betas and omegas did happen, and some were successful but Alana knew Hannibal wouldn't give up his bachelor status for anyone other than an exceptional omega. One of the most affluent people in the higher echelon of Baltimore settling for a beta? Not gonna happen.

But Alana doesn't mourn the lack of a physical relationship with Hannibal. She is happy to be his friend.

"This is delicious Hannibal, thank you." She points to the pasta in her dish with her fork.

He nods in thanks for the compliment and resumes eating. "I find I'm too long in the tooth for an omega." After he swallows. "A man of my age, I'm set in my ways. I feel it would be too inconvenient to feel compassion for another now."

"Hannibal…" Alana laughs "You're not old. You're… "she pauses, searching for the right words. "You're refined."

They both chuckle. The meal is finished amid polite, enjoyable conversation. Hannibal helps Alana into her coat and bids her farewell. They agree on lunch again in a weeks time.

With the room once again empty and another patient not due for 30 minutes Hannibal sits at his desk and resumes his research on neuro-divergence in children, signs and symptoms. He qualified as a surgeon many years ago and his rotation in pediatrics was successful but his mental health rotation only included adults. His training as a psychiatrist was mainly focused on adults as well. And neuro-divergence isn't the same and mental illness. Mental illness can be overcome, therapy, medication, patience and someone with a mental illness can mostly function as someone without one. Neuro-divergence such as autism is just who a person was. An alignment of synapses in the brain, created in the womb, showing signs as a child developed. The research available was enlightening. So much more available than when Hannibal studied to be a psychiatrist.

His investigation was interrupted by a knock on his door. Checking his watch he realized he was late opening the door for his next client. His confusion flared for a moment. It was highly unlike him. The omega in his basement, the sweet silent pup who came with him, were taking up a little more of his headspace than he realized.

He rose from his chair, closing the cover on his tablet. Striding confidently across the room, he straightened his jacket and opened the office door.

“Hello Franklyn.”

_____

After copying out his patient notes, as was his routine, Hannibal made himself dinner. As he chopped and sautéed, he wondered if the omega and his pup might be ready for more solid foods. Their malnourished bodies had gained more color over the last week, maybe a small amount of weight, nowhere near the weight they should be of course. Hannibal couldn’t help

notice the clothing he had given Will was very baggy on him despite being a size small. Omegas should be soft on the edges, small, delicate. Hannibal was surprised at Will's masculine structure, only a few inches shorter than himself, angular and broad shouldered. He didn't have the typical features of an omega. His chin was scruffy, although his beard didn't grow longer than a centimetre he noticed, most omegas couldn't grow a beard at all and Hannibal hadn't supplied shaving supplies, it seemed the omega wouldn't need them.

Will had rough hands, not the smooth soft skin typical of his gender. Will had the hands of a man who worked with tools. Hannibal wondered if he had manual jobs before he became a slave. He found himself wanting to know when the omega had been captured into the trafficking trade. If he possibly had a life before his enslavement, if he had a family looking for him. A simple google search might provide the answers but Hannibal didn't know Will's surname, he never provided it.

Placing his guests dinner on the tray he went to his pantry and selected a few snacks to add to the meal. He added some dried fruits and nuts in a bowl to the tray, making a mental note to go grocery shopping over the weekend to get some packaged snacks more suitable for a child. And some chocolate, omegas loved chocolate. It struck him that he was making an effort for Will, trying to appease his omega nature. He hadn't even decided to keep the man yet, why was he planning on food to make the man and his pup happy?

Hannibal made his way down the stairs, closing and affectively locking the basement door behind him. And placed the tray on the table by the door outside the room.

Since Will's admission that he had potentially killed an alpha who owned him, he realized he needed to be cautious. While Will was still weak, the burn on his shoulder healing and the infection clearing nicely, he still had a pup to protect, a reason to be fierce. He didn't appear to be dangerous, but Hannibal wasn't taking any chances. He peered through the spy hole in the door and saw Will on the floor next to Adam, they were both drawing with the art supplies Hannibal had given them. Hannibal felt a warmth somewhere in his chest, a tiny almost unnoticeable preen from his alpha ego. He had provided, his omega was happy.

Straightening and pointedly ignoring the feeling, Hannibal grabbed the tray and unlocked the door. Beside it he picked up his medical bag, keeping it by the door for convenience.

Will stood up the instant the key turned in the lock. He dropped the pencil he was holding and moved in front of Adam who ignored Hannibal's presence entirely, absorbed in his

sketching.

“Good Evening Will” he said, placing the tray on the table near the door “Good evening Adam”

The pup didn’t reply, Hannibal wasn’t surprised. “I see you’re putting my gift to good use.” He held out his hand. “May I?”

“Hi, uh, yes.” Will replied and bent down to pic up a drawing from the pile on the floor. He handed it to Hannibal, stretching to place the drawing in his hand, not stepping any closer. He left his eyes on Hannibal's shoes.

Hannibal scrutinized the drawing. It was of car, well, it was almost a car. It was missing a door and its wheels. There was a crudely drawn tree next to it. “Adams?” He asked. Will nodded. “Its quite good for a small child.” Hannibal said.

He could see Will let out a small smile, his eyes moving back to the pup on the floor, still drawing another car. Will scent let out a subtle puff of pride. The love he felt for the child on the floor evident.

“He never left the house, where we were before. He.. he only saw the world through the windows. He.. he never went outside” Will muttered, his voice soft.

“I see” Hannibal nodded. “Its a very good drawing.” He handed the picture back to Will who took it gently, cradling it to his chest.

Hannibal gestured to the bed, Will knew the drill now. Hannibal would check his injuries, change the bandages. It was all very clinical, detached. Will would sometimes fade away while Hannibal cleaned the wounds. Hannibal recognized it as a type of dissociation, a way to protect himself from being disturbed by his trauma. He never commented on it.

Once that was done, Hannibal didn't move away. He took off the sterile gloves and placed them back on the bag to dispose of later. "May I ask you a question?"

Will seemed to come back to himself and nodded, his curls falling into his face.

"Do you have a surname?"

Wills eyebrows furrowed in confusion. His eyes flicked up to Hannibal for a moment, then looked away to the wall.

"What I mean to ask, do you have anyone looking for you? A family?"

Will took in a shuddering breath. His shoulders rising up to hie ears, his fists clenched. "No family."

Hannibal nodded and stood. "I'll leave you too your meal, I've added some snacks I hope you find acceptable. If you have any nutritional requests I am going grocery shopping on Saturday." He picked up the medical bag and made to leave the room when Will spoke up.

"We.. we were told our surname wasn't needed. When I was purchased. I was property, not a person."

Hannibal turned to the omega, listening attentively to Will's delicate, gruff voice.

"You are not property now Will" he said gently.

Will scoffed. Then covered his mouth quickly, regretting the sound. There was a long pause, the air in the room turning sour, the scent of distressed omega filled the space. The pup on the floor let out a small whine and dropped the crayon he was using. Will was waiting to be struck. Hannibal stood as still as he could. He would not punish Will for expressing an emotion. The man was entitled to them.

When Will realized he was safe he spoke again “My surname as a boy was Graham. My father was called Bill. He.. he sold me when I was 15.”

The omega said nothing more, he moved slowly to the table holding their dinner. Hannibal realized, to his surprise, he was being excused from the room and left quietly.

Breakfast

Chapter Notes

Hello! here *holds of scrap of paper with messy handwriting on it* have a new chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Something was stirring in Hannibal. It had been 4 weeks since he found Will and Adam. He had fallen into an undesired pattern. His normal routine wasn't disrupted per se. His mornings were the same, his work day normal, his evenings all kept to the traditions that he led his life by. Hunting still happened. He hadn't displayed any of these kills, just harvested what he wanted and disposed of the rest. Except. Except now he prepared 3 meals. He purchased extra food, childish snacks. Adam had taken to little boxes of raisins and animal crackers with glee, bouncing on his toes when he was offered a box by Will, who smiled gently at him and thanked Hannibal for providing them. And providing was what Hannibal was doing. A continuous, daily presentation of food, clean clothing, clean bedding.

Hannibal had always gained some semblance of joy in providing for his acquaintances. Watching them consume his kills was a stimulating event. Dinner guests unwittingly partaking in cannibalism makes Hannibal feel rapturous. His nerves singing as he watches their lips and teeth work the flesh in their mouth, unaware, blind.

But providing for the slender, vulnerable omega and his pup in Hannibal's basement is invoking something else in Hannibal.

It's making him feel like a good Alpha. Not one to deny his baser instincts, he's always embraced his dynamic. Satisfied with the feeling of blood on his skin, flesh hanging from his fangs and fingers. His athleticism and strength helping to hunt efficiently and affectively, taking down men twice his size with a simple snap of their neck. But this thing with Will is something else.

The notion that he is being a good alpha and therefore a good man is jarring to Hannibal when it dawns on him one Saturday morning. His step falters as he enters the kitchen, ready to prepare another nutritious breakfast for the three of them. He realizes that he is becoming

reliable, predictable. The thought is enraging. Suddenly Hannibal feels his age, the call of his dynamic telling him he's getting older, needs to settle down, provide for a mate, comfort not hurt. Give not take.

He turns on his heel and returns to his bedroom to dress for the day, deciding to have breakfast out somewhere. He doesn't know where to be exact, he isn't prone to dining out, but he won't be making breakfast like a housewife, like a predictable dependable alpha to an omega he didn't choose and a pup that he didn't sire.

On his drive into town he realizes he really has no idea where to eat a good breakfast. His normal eateries are lunch spots or elegant restaurants for dinner. And he definitely isn't going to Starbucks. He pulls into a side street and calls Alana knowing she will be able to help him in his predicament.

"Hannibal? What a lovely surprise." She says as she picks up the call.

"I find myself needing your help, would you like to join me for an impromptu breakfast?"

"That sounds lovely, although I'm not really dressed yet. Give me 20 minutes?"

"Of course, take all the time you need." He states amicably.

"Where are we going?"

"Ah yes, well that's your choice."

Alana sniffles a giggle "Hannibal are you asking me to breakfast because you don't know where to get breakfast?"

"You caught me." They chuckle together "I must admit eating breakfast I haven't cooked myself hasn't happened in a very long time. Do you know anywhere pleasant?"

She gives him the address of a quaint little coffee shop a few miles away and agrees to meet him there. He parks across the street and cringes a little at the tinny bell ringing out above the door as he enters. The shop is well lit and classical music plays out of small speakers near the top of the room, not too loudly. Tables are a good distance from each other to allow for semi privacy. Little flowers in vases adorn the tables. The place looks clean as far as Hannibal can see. And he trusts Alana to know his taste and she seems to have delivered. He sits at a table near the window and a waitress comes over to take his order, a simple white coffee and whatever pastry they have. She offers him a pecan danish and he nods in acceptance, thanking her as she walks away. She smiles politely and starts on his order.

Alana joins him just as the waitress brings his order and smiles in recognition of Alana, she smiles back and asks for her usual. He stands as she sits down, then sits himself, ever the gentleman. She narrows her eyes at him.

“You look… ruffled” she says.

“Ruffled?”

“Ruffled.”

“I’m not sure what you mean Alana.” He sweeps his hands down the red cashmere sweater he's wearing, smoothing it out and the grey button down underneath.

“Like someone has come along and tussled all your feathers.”

“I was unaware I am a bird.” His voice teasing.

She smiles and accepts the coffee and pastry brought to her by the waitress. “You’re no bird Hannibal, a cat maybe, but you’re definitely bothered by something.”

“A cat?”

“Stop trying to obfuscate. Are you ok?” She frowns at him now, her eyes roaming his face for a sign of distress.

“I wasn’t aware I appeared ‘ruffled’” he takes a sip of his coffee. It's good, really good. He makes a mental note to come again.

“Hannibal?” She reaches across the table and puts her hand over his as he's resting it on the table. “Are you ok?”

Hannibal sighs. He can’t tell Alana about the omega in his basement, or the pup, or the tugging he feels behind his ribs when he thinks about them. That strange fleeting feeling of being *good*, of doing *good*, a *good* alpha doing what alphas are supposed to do. He instead talks of Will as though he were a patient, he had told this to Alana previously of course. He doesn’t say his name or mention Adam, but he does let her know Will was abused in his previous relationship. And vehemently tells his own thoughts that the only relationship he has with Will is one of captor and captured. Details he gives her all within patient and doctor confidentiality, he is always professional. As a man and an Alpha, the suffering of an omega has affected him.

“Its sounds awful Hannibal, that poor man.” She sighs, always one to be led by her heart, he doubts her pity would be appreciated by Will.

Under the meek, misused and exploited aura of Will lurks a darkness Hannibal has only glimpsed. He knows he must be patient with him. But he's seen the fiery glances thrown his way from under Wills soft fringe. He knows Will is waiting for the opportune moment to strike and it will be electrifying.

They talk for another hour, enjoying their coffee and pastries, their conversation moving from their psychiatric work to Alana’s new position for the FBI, helping the Behavioral Science Unit with criminal profiling. The idea the FBI has recruited a close friend sends a little thrill down Hannibal's spine. What a fun game. He hopes one day they ask Alana to recommend a colleague as he knows she will turn to him. To be within the hallowed halls of the FBI, a killer among catchers. A cat, as Alana put it, among the birds.

They say goodbye after a time and Hannibal makes his way back home. When he enters the house he goes to the kitchen to finally prepare food for Will and Adam. He adds some snacks to the food tray and glasses of orange juice, puts in the code for the basement and descends.

Peaking through the spy hole he can't see is guests anywhere. He puts his ear to the door and listens. Very faintly he can hear water splashing and the soft deep tones of Will singing. He unlocks the door and places the food tray on the table. He stands in the middle of the room and waits. The scent of oranges and lavender subtly pass through the air, the soap he had provided them being used. Under this he can smell the understated scent of Will, spicy and woody, neroli and jasmine, warm leather, vanilla and patchouli. He takes a deep breath in, rolling the scent over his tongue and roof of his mouth.

The soft baby powder scent of pup hits him next, gentle in the way cotton wool feels on the skin. He closes his eyes and breathes. That feeling is back behind his ribs and in his stomach. It feels like grief. He imagines soft ash blonde hair intwined in his fingers as he braids it, the tinkling peel of laughter.

His eyes snap open as the bathroom door swings and out steps Adam wrapped in a fluffy white towel. There are more sounds of water as Will continues to bathe.

Adam moves through the room slowly, clutching the towel around himself, just his small hands and fluffy fringe are visible. The towel reaches the floor. He stops in front of Hannibal shivering slightly.

Hannibal says nothing and reaches down, he moves his hands over Adams head, rubbing the towel into his hair, caressing his small skull in gentle soothing motions and Adam allows it, leaning into his large hands as they pass over his damp curls. Hannibal gets lost in the activity, his mind opening another door he had long since sealed shut. The basement becomes a sun filled play room, he's on his knees, kissing a button nose and laughing the way only a child can, with hope and light and innocence. The memory is a bright happy thing, he feels the warmth of it on his skin.

The spell is broken when a gasp is let out into the space. The darkness of the basement comes rushing back and Hannibal takes a staggering step backwards. Will stands in the bathroom

door wrapped in a robe, his curls dripping onto his shoulders, his eyes wide. Soap suds run down his bare legs creating a puddle on the floor.

Adam lets out a small squeak and dashes to Will's side, his towel dropping in his haste.

"Hannibal?" whispers Will.

Hannibal says nothing, he can't bring himself to meet the omegas eyes. He turns, his body thrumming with anger. Is it anger? He feels his cheeks flushing. No, it's not anger, its embarrassment, getting caught being kind has filled him with a surge of shame. His mind replacing the pup in the room with a smaller, chubbier pup, with dark mischievous eyes.

He lets out a low growl, a warning to all in the room. Stay away. Don't move. Hannibal stalks towards the door, his shoulders hunched. He closes the door behind him gently and turns the key in the lock. Before he leaves he peers through the spy hole again.

Will hasn't moved. He's frozen in place and Adam is clawing at his robe, frantic for his mothers embrace. Hannibal leans his forehead on the door and closes his eyes. He takes a steadying breath.

"Breathe Will" he says into the wood, his voice calm and even.

He can hear the omega suck in a lungful of air. The pup beside him now whining and humming in that monotone way he does when distressed.

Hannibal straightens and leaves the basement.

Chapter End Notes

Yes I have stolen the description of Will's scent from the Guerlain website for their cologne Habit Rouge because I recently found out that its Hugh Dancy's favourite. Did I also buy a sample to spray on my wrist and sniff all day? yes, yes I did.

Interrupted Again

Chapter Notes

Hello *waves franticly* I found this new chapter!

Bill Graham did sell his son Will, when Will was 15. Surprisingly it was all registered with the ORO, Omega Registry Office. After a short search Hannibal was able to find all the details. Omegas were registered with the ORO after they presented, their parents were able to find an Alpha through the registry and get financial compensation if the omega and alpha are compatible and form a bond. Omegas are rare, the numbers of trafficked omegas alarmingly high. There is a semblance of safety when an omega is registered, their details entered into the system, if an omega goes missing an investigation is launched, some are found, some are not. Will was never on the list of missing omegas. Only his pairing with one Gerald Webb, 62, Minnesota was on the system. Sixty two? The registry states the arrangement was for companionship. Still, the age gap is alarming. Hannibal imagines Will, nothing more than a pup, skinny, his hair long, his body slim in the arms of an overbearing, overweight, sleazy, groping alpha. It raises his hackles, the hairs on the back of his neck standing to attention, his inner alpha snarls, fangs gnashing.

He wonders if this was the Alpha that Will had hurt. Maybe killed. His guests have been with him for 5 weeks now. After the incident in which he dried Adam's hair, losing himself to the memory of caring for someone just as small, just as vulnerable, all Hannibal does now is open the door, put down the food and leave. Sometimes he retrieves their clothing from the hamper, bringing clean things with him when he returns.

Will doesn't say anything. Hannibal can feel his eyes on him. Wary that Hannibal is moving through the room with an air of detachment. Hannibal has walls around his mind palace, they are thick, sturdy. Made of the densest stone, the strongest concrete. Yet he feels them crumble whenever in Will and Adam's presence. Wether Will can feel this or not, Hannibal doesn't know. He's probably waiting for Hannibal to snap. Get angry at him, hurt him, hurt his pup. And Hannibal wants to. Oh yes, he would like to hurt Will Graham. This omega who he didn't expect to find. Who has a pup that screams and whines but never speaks. It's entirely irrational his hatred of them both, he knows it is. And he can feel it seeping out of his skin, forming around himself like a haze of writhing shadows, a cocoon of fury.

His frustration with himself at appearing weak and good to Will is as disconcerting as his jealousy of the idea of Will with another Alpha. His mind can't make up its, well, mind.

Trying to distract himself from his woes Hannibal takes his time with his most recent pig. Having selected a card from his rolodex of business cards, cards acquired as and when someone is less than gracious to Hannibal in his day to day life, Hannibal sets his targets on Micheal Flint. A dermatologist who Hannibal visited 2 years ago when a new mole appeared on his shoulder. Dr Flint had the audacity to suggest Hannibal was to expect more blemishes now he was older and liver spots were just a normal process for a man of his advancement. Hannibal has been tracking Flint for four days, watching his comings and goings. The man has visited the same bar every night and now Hannibal watches the door from inside his car, parked safely across the street, half a block down. When Flint emerges, swaying slightly, his arm raised to hail a cab Hannibal starts his car and pulls up beside him. Flint, in his stupor opens the back door and climbs inside. Hannibal chuckles to himself, it really was that easy. During the drive home Hannibal pulls over and sedates Flint, the man barely puts up a struggle.

Hannibal hopes the butchering of this pig will ease his mind for the time being. Butchering, preparing, cooking, eating. A ritual of sorts. Honed and practiced. His own little religion, spitting in the face of God at his dinner table. Or sitting beside him joining in his revery if modern religion was to be believed. God is vicious. God is cruel. And so is Hannibal Lecter.

As Hannibal carries Flint into the basement through the side door behind the garage he hears a noise. Not from outside. From the room Will and Adam are in.

He places Flints body onto his steel surgical table and removes his coat. The noise hasn't stopped. It's a muffled yell. Panicked and desperate. Hannibal moves to the basement door and places his ear to the wood. The yelling gets louder then quieter again. Has Will been waiting for Hannibal to leave and call for help? All this time he presumed the omega was quiet in the room, or spoke to Adam. Hannibal has never heard Will's voice louder than a gruff whisper, but here he is shouting his lungs out. No wonder he had no voice to converse with Hannibal, he's been screaming for help. Hannibal reaches into his pocket and rips the door open. His lips curled into a snarl, ready to let the omega know that the basement is sound proofed. His neighbors far away on either side of a large garden, there is no one to call for help from.

As the door opens fully the smell of sweat and distress is pungent. Hannibal nostrils fill with the scent, it knocks him back for a moment. When he finally gains his senses he realizes that no, Will hasn't been screaming to escape.

Will and Adam are on the bed, the sheets tangled around Will's sweaty body, his legs caught up in the fabric, anchored down. Will writhes, his brow furrowed, his mouth slack, panting and crying out. Adam sits higher up on the pillow stroking his mothers hair gently, barely moving the curls with each movement of his small hand. Hannibal pauses his aggressive entrance into the room. Will is asleep. Deeply it seems, having not been woken up by his pups ministrations of comfort.

Night terrors. People who have suffered trauma are prone to them. And Will, Hannibal knows, has suffered greatly. Hannibal approaches the bed, Will still crying out, fighting imaginary demons. Adam growls from his perch, a tiny sound barely heard over his mothers tears.

Hannibal places his hand gently on Will's shoulder, shaking it slightly "Will?, Will wake up."

It doesn't work. Hannibal tries again, louder this time. "Will, Wake up, you're dreaming."

This time it does work. Will sits bolt upright, his eyes wild, he launches himself off the bed, sweeping Adam up in his arms as he does so. His legs still tangled in the bed linen, don't allow him to go far and they both fall onto the floor in a heap, Will on his side, Adam tucked beneath his chin. Will holds up his hand to fend off whatever he sees that has followed him into the waking world. Hannibal doesn't move. He lets Will get his bearings as he pants and huffs on the basement floor. Adam begins to cry silently in Will's arms, his small whines bring Will back to reality and he strokes the pups back, chuffing and purring to calm him down.

Eventually Hannibal stands and bends down to untangle Will from the sheet around his legs and feet. He places it back on the bed, stands and offers his hand to Will to help him up.

Will looks at the offered hand wearily, his cheeks covered in drying tears, his brow creased. He doesn't take Hannibal's hand and moves unsteadily to his feet.

Hannibal lowers his attempt at help and puts both hands behind his back, his fist gripping his wrist. He's not often rebuffed from offers of aid. Most people would take his hand and thank him for it. But not Will.

Will turns and walks into the adjoining bathroom, closing the door softly and turning on the light. Hannibal looks at the bed, the sheets are in disarray and covered in sweat. He decides to change them while he can. Removing the soiled bedding and placing clean ones on he finds in the pile by the bed.

As he's tucking the new clean blanket in place Will comes out of the bathroom, pup in his arms still. He looks like he's washed his face. And Adam has stopped crying, he now yawns deepening in Will's arms and nuzzles his neck. Hannibal moves away from the bed, his hands once again behind his back. He doesn't want Will to see the way his fingers wrap themselves closed, clenching with what? Annoyance? Frustration? Anger that his night of peaceful butchering was interrupted once again by the omega? Frustration with himself that he cared enough to wake Will instead of leave him flailing in the dark of his mind?

Will lays Adam down on the bed, the pup's eyes already drooping shut. He pops his thumb in his mouth and Will strokes his hair for a moment. Then he turns to Hannibal.

"Thank you for waking me" he whispers.

"No trouble at all. I wasn't aware you suffered from night terrors." Hannibal whispers back just as quietly.

Will nods and rubs the back of his neck, a nervous gesture. "Yeah, even when I was a kid. Always been a bit sensitive"

"I see. Would you like a sleep aid? I can get you something to help you relax."

Will looks confused, his eyes never going above Hannibal's collar "What?"

"Something to help you-"

“What?” Will interrupts “You haven’t spoken to me for a week, and now you want to help me? Jesus Hannibal.” Will grips his hair, his frustration evident. “Whats happening here? First you kill my alpha to get me, then you kidnap us, you feed us, bandage me, give Adam pencils, then you blank us for a week, I presume its because you were finally going to kill us, and now this? Waking me? Wanting to help me? We’ve been here for 5 weeks and every day I think you’re going to come in here and end our lives, or take me somewhere and.. and…” Through out Will’s tirade he’s gesturing widely about the room, sweeping his arms over to the bed and the drawings on the floor, the empty tray by the door. He doesn’t notice Hannibal slowly moving towards him, it’s only when Hannibal is a few inches away does Will’s voice slowly die in his throat, a choked out sound replacing words.

This close Will can see the fine lines by Hannibal lips, the sweat sitting on his neck, his tie slightly loose. Will gasps for air again.

Hannibal tilts his head like a great sphinx cat “I did not kill your alpha to get you Will.”

Will shakes his head in disbelief “What?”

“I did not kill your alpha to get you. I found you after I had already killed him. Adam showed me where you were, lead me straight to you in the basement.”

“Then why? Why did you kill him?”

Hannibal leans forward slightly, catching Will’s eye. They look at each other, Will holding his breath “I killed him because he was discourteous, discourtesy is unspeakably ugly to me.”

“You killed him because he was rude.” Will states, his mind reeling.

“Yes” Hannibal whispers.

“I've been rude to you” Will concludes.

“Yes” Hannibal whispers again his pupils dilating. Will tries desperately to look away but he feels pinned in place. The black void of Hannibal’s eyes pulling him in. He can feel his chest constricting, as if a snake were wrapped around his chest, tightening its coils, squeezing and squeezing. They stay like that for what feels like minutes to Will, but was merely seconds.

Hannibal breaks the tension by straightening, turning his back and moving to the door. Before he leaves he looks over his shoulder “Breathe Will.”

Wills lungs suddenly fill with air, he didn’t even realize he had stopped breathing. He gulps it down, his hand clutching the t-shirt at his chest.

Hannibal’s eyes crinkle at the corners and he exits the room, locking the door behind him.

Soup.

Chapter Notes

I listened to pretty depressing music while writing this. You're welcome.

Hannibal has been purchasing extra snacks with his grocery shopping. Today is no different. As he walks the aisles of the higher end grocery store he frequents, he reaches the prepackaged dried fruits and crackers. Protein packed organic oat crackers make it into the cart, along with dried organic apricots. Next in are the little boxes of raisins in the colourful box with a train on it, packaged to appeal to pups. Hannibal then moves onto the animal shaped crackers, he knows there's no nutritional value to them. But Adam seemed happy with the little shapes and as long as he eats, Hannibal its ok with them.

He continues with his perusal of childish snacks when there is a sudden tap on his shoulder. He turns to see Ellen Komeda peering at him suspiciously.

"Hannibal are you feeding your inner child?" She eyes his shopping cart. A teasing twinkle in her eye.

Hannibal has always liked Ellen Komeda, a sharp, intelligent woman, with whip smart humor and mischief in her eye. Hannibal takes her hand and smiles widely.

"Ellen" he purrs, kissing the back of her hand. Charming as ever. Her smile broadens, her narrow cheeks filling out.

"Animal crackers Hannibal?" She raises one of her perfectly drawn eyebrows. "An experiment?"

"Nothing of the sort my dear, simply taking some essentials to a poorly neighbor and his pup."

"You're so chivalrous." She smirks. "Ive never known you to dote on an omega so."

Hannibal hides his grimace well behind his smile. No, he has never been one to dote on omegas. Preening, pining creatures. Batting their eyelashes at him at social events, the opera. Father's pushing their unmated young omegas at him for his appraisal. No, omegas have never interested him. As an Alpha, an intelligent, rich successful Alpha, he's had omegas thrust in his direction from his teenage years. Days spent fighting off their interests in college in France, then more here in America. The rich exotic Alpha training to be a surgeon. The top surgeon in his field, now the successful psychiatrist. It's why he refuses omega clients. Their simpering and whining grating on his nerves in session, then proclaiming he can save them, mate them.

“Not doting, being generous to his plight.”

“I hope this sickly omega isn’t the reason you haven’t hosted a dinner party of late?” The corners of her mouth turning down into a fake pout. “I’ve not been invited for years Hannibal” she teased.

“Mrs Komeda, you were in my home a few weeks ago.”

“Not at a dinner party” she laughs.

“I cannot force a feast” he replies simply.

Ellen laughs again. A Lovely throaty chuckle. Hannibal does enjoy her company greatly.

“I have to go, but, Hannibal, darling, a feast must present itself soon!” She grips his forearm in a friendly gesture then steps back.

He nods to her as she saunters away, a subtle movement of his head, neither agreeing or disagreeing. He watches her walk down the aisle and turn the corner, her long skirt swishing as she goes.

He realizes that, yes it has been a while since he hosted a party. But with the omega in his basement, the door for it inside his kitchen, he risks the chance of Will being scented. And how would he explain that away? The botched hunt last week is also reason to move them. He hadn’t been able to focus on his dismemberment of Flint. He had hurried the job, distracted by the figures behind the locked door. Will talking to Adam in that gruffly whisper of his, Adam sometimes humming in response.

Hannibal finishes his shopping and loads up the boot of his car. As he drives back to his home he knows he must think of a new way to hide Will and Adam in his house. Or at least be able to explain their presence there. The sudden appearance of an unmated omega in his house would raise alarm bells within the walls of his social circle. And among those who consider themselves his friends. That and a pup too? No.

He could kill them, wash his hands of them completely. Be free once again to hunt how and when he wanted. Not be responsible for two more mouths to feed. Although, feeding his guests hadn't been a hardship. Honestly he had enjoyed finding ways to increase their much needed vitamins and protein. Smoothies, little boxes of raisins, animal crackers. More meat for Will as Adam seemed to dislike it. And both parties seem to have gained weight. Adams cheeks filling out more, Will's ribs less prominent in his chest. Something in him suddenly purred with satisfaction. A little niggling voice that said well done, good alpha, feeding the omega well. Hannibal shivered at the unwanted intrusive thought. There was also the idea of killing a pup. Hannibal would not kill a pup. So what then? Kill Will and take the pup to a police station, say he found him wandering around, let the local authority deal with him, child services, an orphanage. Hannibal shivered again with repulsion. No. He wouldn't do that. As fast as it came the memory of cold stone, wet pillowcases, the feeling of a hollowed out stomach, flared into his mind then rushed out. He took a deep breath to centre himself.

Once he unpacked his shopping, he grabs the box of animal crackers and makes his way down to the basement room. He can hear Will talking, he can't make out the words but Will's voice is quiet, calm. He unlocks the door and enters the room.

Will is on the floor with Adam, the blanket from their bed is spread out like a picnic blanket. Adam is drawing with the crayons he gave him. Will looks up and then at the box in Hannibal hand and smiles shyly. Hannibal knows the smile is to placate him, the omega appearing docile to appease the Alpha. It reeks of lying and makes Hannibal squeeze the box in his hand slightly tighter. The smile drops from Will's face when he sees Hannibal's reaction. His brow furrowing at the action.

It's Adam who stands and takes the box from Hannibal. He says nothing as he sits down again and rips it open, popping a cracker into his mouth without biting it first, then wiggles his toes as he chews the snack. Will stands slowly, turning to face Hannibal and position himself in front of his pup.

"Uh.. sorry, I guess he was hungry." He says scratching the back of his neck.

"It's quite alright." Hannibal replies, a smile at the corner of his mouth. "I'm glad he likes them."

Will says nothing else, just stares at the floor in that awkward way he does. Hannibal watches him for a moment, enjoying watching Will squirm, then turns to make his way out of the room.

He stops by the table there and spots his copy of *A Passage to India*. He taps the cover.

“Did you enjoy this?” He asks, turning once again to look at Will shifting from foot to foot.

“Uh… I didn’t…” Will shakes his head, his curls bouncing.

“Oh? That’s a shame, I quite enjoyed it myself.” Hannibal picks the book up and puts it in his pocket.

“No I.. I didn’t read it.” Will explains. “I couldn’t.. the words were too hard. I didn’t understand them.”

Hannibal can smells Will’s discomfort. It smells like rain on a canopy of pine trees. Sharp and heady.

“I see.” Hannibal says quietly.

“I tried.” The omega rushes out. “I did try, I just… I was never taught. My first alpha tried to teach me but he couldn’t see good and uh… we just gave up.” His hands have made it to the hem of his t-shirt, the thin fabric gripped in his fists, twisting the cotton. Adam lets out a small squeak at his mothers discomfort.

“There is no shame in not knowing how to read Will.” Hannibal states. “And yes I understand your first alpha was quite old.” There’s a coldness to Hannibal words that make Will shiver.

“How.. how did you know that?”

“I did some research. Your first Alpha bought you through the proper channels from your father yes?”

Will nods, his fists clenching tighter to the hem of his shirt. Knuckles blanching.

“When you told me your surname I looked you up online. Registered with the ORO when you presented. Did you not attend school before you were sold Will?”

There is no harshness to Hannibal tone Will notes, his voice is almost robotic, clinical. Like a Doctor would speak to a patient. Detached. Will can feel otherwise though, he can feel the tension in the room like syrup around his ankles, sloshing to an undercurrent of bitterness. Like swallowing something crunchy without chewing it first. Will’s mind supplies the image of dry bones poking through his neck and he closes his eyes to banish the thought.

“I did for a while, but we moved a lot. In the end it was easier for my Pa to just keep me with him on the docks, teach me his work.”

“And this older Alpha, he tried to teach you?”

“Yes, he did. But I was stubborn and Gerald was losing his sight. It didn’t work in the end.” Will admits, a slight blush coming to his cheeks. Wether from the admittance at his own stubbornness of the other alphas name leaving Will’s mouth Hannibal doesn’t know.

“Was this the Alpha you killed Will? The one you unleashed your fury on?” Hannibal takes a decidedly imposing step toward the omega.

Wills head snaps up, his eyes fixing on Hannibal’s. There is the sudden scent of burning leaves in the room, a bonfire.

“No! I would never. Never. Gerald was.. he was a good man.” There are tears forming in the delicate lash line of Will’s eyes. His chest heaving.

Adam begins to hum his monotone tune from where he sits on the floor. A slight rocking back and forth beginning.

“Gerald was old but he was kind.” Wills arms are now cradled over his chest effectively giving himself a hug. “He never hurt me. He never bonded with me. Never.. never even kissed me.”

Hannibal watches Will as the tears now fall freely down his cheeks making them ruddy and blushed. Will doesn’t cower though, his back is straight. Hannibal admires the sight. The truth makes Will strong it seems. Anger makes him fierce, even in his sorrowful state, the truth has Will glowing.

“That stupid old man died in his chair watching a football game. I had nothing to do with it!” Will’s lip now trembles as he continues to speak. “I was in the damned garden getting tomatoes for dinner. I knew he wasn’t feeling well. I knew it. I could feel it. He insisted on no doctors though, no hospitals. I shouldn’t have trusted him. I should’ve insisted…” He trails off, the puff leaving his chest. His grief expelling into the room, the scent of it like daffodils rotting in a vase on a warm windowsill.

Will slowly sinks to the floor. His knees coming up to his chest, his arms wrapped around them.

Hannibal watches as Adam crawls over to Will and lays on the blanket beside him. He still has his box of animal crackers in his hand and puts one in his mouth as Will continues to speak.

“Stupid, stupid old man. I didn’t know what to do. I should’ve just left. Packed and left but I didn’t. I called an ambulance. They took the body and said they would notify next of kin.” Will lets out a bitter laugh and wipes the tears from his cheeks. “That wasn’t me though. Of course it was me. It was his son. It took his son and daughter 2 weeks to come to the house. I was in my room, I heard the door and came down. They thought I was an intruder, said they would call the police. I tried to explain, his daughter understood first. Then his son, he was disgusted. Said Gerald and I were disgusting, he wouldn’t listen when I told him all I did was cook, clean, listen to his stories. He didn’t believe me. I begged to know where Gerald was,

begged to go to his funeral, I didn't get to say goodbye. I'd been with him for 5 years and didn't get to say good bye."

Will scrubs his hands down his face. His tears stopping. "His son came back the next day and told me to put on a suit. He was going to take me to say goodbye. I was so grateful. I thanked him and put on my best clothes, my best shoes. It wasn't much but I knew Gerald wouldn't care. We got in the car but we didn't end up at the cemetery. He took me to a warehouse in the middle of the city, told me get out. I was crying, I didn't know what was going on. Two men grabbed my arms and marched me into the building, there was a man at a desk, Gerald's son talked to him for a few moments while the men took my clothes off of me. They stripped me and he just walked out. Left me there. Didn't look back. "

While Will had been talking Hannibal lowered himself to the floor a few feet away. Sitting on his heels as though in prayer. He watches as Will looks at Adam, he runs his fingers through the pups curls.

"The put me in a shipping container with some other omegas. It was so dark. As I moved further into it the door shut. A hand reached out and grabbed mine. It was cold and held on so tightly. That omega and I held onto each other through the night. We couldn't even see each other but we held on. When they opened the doors the men made us all stand up, they had guns. I held that omegas hand until they pulled us apart. I'll always remember his face as they dragged us away. His eyes. The fear in his eyes."

Will stops and takes a deep breath. It's then that he notices Hannibal sitting opposite him.

"Ive never… told anyone about that." Will whispers.

"I'm a good therapist Will." Hannibal says not unkindly. Will lets out a small chuckle. His gaze gets as high as Hannibal's collar, his earlier anger dissipated, the aversion to eye contact back in place. "I'm making soup for lunch, would you like some?"

Will nods "thank you."

Hannibal knows his thanks is for listening, for not judging. For keeping his mouth closed as a part of Will's past spilled from his lips. He also knows Will knows this too. But they don't acknowledge it. They don't need to.

Hannibal raises gracefully from the floor, his limbs unfurling from his position like a tree rising from a forest floor. He exists the room and returns to the kitchen to prepare lunch.

Grief

Chapter Notes

Short chapter today sorry. Work has picked up and I'm so distracted.

Hannibal notices Will is quieter over the next few days after he tells him about his first alpha Gerald. Theres a scent of ash on a forest floor whenever he's in Will and Adams room. Its grief, Hannibal knows this. He’s come across the scent many times, in his office from his patients talking about loved ones, when an acquaintance passed and his omega wife had come to thank Hannibal for being at the funeral, it had dusted his foyer and taken days to pass.

And now it fills the basement room. Seeping under the door to invade the space beyond. Coating his surgical instruments, the steel table, the freezer door handles. Hannibal feels it touch his skin every time he opens the freezer door to retrieve some meat for dinner. It leaves a glossy sheen to his finger tips.

And he hates it. It permeates his thoughts. It reminds him of the burnt out rooms of his families home, exposed beams smoking in the dawn sun. The sound of a child coughing beside him. Rough hands grabbing him, pushing him. Hannibal hates it.

He knows Will has probably never had time to process his grief. To scared to ever let that wall down and now it’s fallen, he’s fallen too. Stubbled down into grief with little Adam by his side, touching his hands and fingers. Placing snacks on his lap. The pup too young to understand his mother just needs time.

But Hannibal isn’t sure he can wait. The smell is choking him every time he takes them food, it follows him as he launders their clothes and bed sheets. The fabric usually smells of Will’s fear, his apprehension, his sweat as his sleep is disturbed with night terrors and the baby powder smell of pup. But now it seems doused in the burning embers of pain.

Hannibal wants to shake him. Take him by his shoulders and shake the smell from Will’s pores, watch the ash fall to the floor and sweep it away. But he knows that doesn’t work, the memory of tiny, skinny shoulders in his hands, shaken by himself through desperation,

pleading to make the smell go away, think of something else little one, they don't like the smell.

So he has to wait. And he is a patient man. Not a good man. But a patient one nonetheless. He will take the omega and his pup their meals, he will clean their clothes and bedsheets. And the scent will go soon.

And it does, eventually begin to tapper out. One week, two and the smell is faint, distant enough to ignore if Hannibal tries very hard. And Hannibal is trying very hard.

The pup perks up too after a while. His mothers scent becoming brighter again. And Hannibal can hear Will's gruff whispers through the door as he approaches with their evening meal. Hannibal puffs out a breath and realizes he feels relief. Will's grief has passed and Hannibal can breathe again. Had he been holding his breath? Regardless, the tight feeling in his chest has loosened. He feels warmth spread to his fingers and tips of his ears. He didn't think he had been so cold these last few weeks. The realization that the omegas grief had affected him so isn't really a shock. Pheromones can affect Alphas and Omegas alike. It's just biology.

He unlocks the door to Will's room and finds them both on the floor, the blanket laid out as usual and Hannibal makes a mental note to buy a rug. The thought stops him in his tracks just for a split second and he questions why he would want to do that. Their comfort should mean nothing to him but he can see Adam shivering as his bare ankle touches the floor and the pup quickly pulls it to himself.

They're cold. Will and Adam are cold and Hannibal can't understand why the thought disturbs him so much. He decides to ignore the feeling and buy a rug, problem sorted. And bring them more blankets.

He puts their food tray on the table by the door, Will looks up at the tray.

"Thank you."

"Chicken, with a garlic and herb sauce, pan fried potatoes and broccoli." Hannibal states.

Will stands and looks over at the plates. “Adam has never tried broccoli, this should be interesting” he huffs a small laugh and rubs the back of his neck. Hannibal tracks the nervous gesture, then watches Will’s hand fall to his side.

Will rarely makes eye contact, his gaze never going higher than Hannibal’s collar and he has found that it allows him to watch Will freely. His curls falling onto his forehead, his fragile neck, his broad shoulders, scarred arms, slender wrists. Both omega and pup have put some weight on since being with Hannibal and he finds himself proud at the idea he has made them healthier. They are still far from the weight they both should be but they’re going in the right direction. Will’s wounds have either completely healed or are healing well. His face is no longer bruised and swollen. The burn on his shoulder has fresh pink skin growing. He still limps as he moves but Hannibal suspects that’s from an old injury healed badly. Will has scars on his face and neck, thin lines that run from his temple to his ear, then more from his ear to his throat. Knife cuts it looks like. Theres one that runs from his earlobe to the corner of his mouth on the left side of his face, its thin and gives Will a small unintentional lopsided smirk. Hannibal made note of them when he first treated Will for his injuries but the more Will’s bruising has healed and his face filled out a little, the more the scars have been noticeable.

Hannibal finds that the scars don't detract from Will’s overall pleasantness. Visual pleasantness that is, Will is fire and brimstone. Even more so since he spoke of Gerald. Silence and distance had turned into snapping, his fangs being shown on more than one occasion, then fear from punishment for snapping at Hannibal. But Hannibal knew it was all from processing his grief so he had allowed it. Now it seems Will is becoming himself again, shyly talking, sharing something small about Adam and himself in the process.

“Your last Alpha didn’t seem like the type to eat anything other than deep fried take out food.” Hannibal mentions.

Will bristles slightly, the reminder about the mechanic still painful in Will’s mind. He glances down at Adam still on the blanket pushing around a tin metal car Hannibal brought him last week. An attempt at distracting the pup so Will could be distracted.

“It wasn’t always like that with him” Will says, “I would cook for us at the beginning. Clean, do laundry. I think… I think it got like that after he started drinking every day.” He sucks in a deep breath. “He got more violent too. Thank you for dinner.”

Hannibal nods his welcome and leaves the room. As he locks the door he can hear Will talk to Adam.

“Hey baby look! Green trees you can eat!” And gently laughs. Adam Squeaks in delight.

When Hannibal enters the kitchen from the basement door he catches sight of his face in the window of the back door. He’s smiling.

Champagne

Chapter Notes

> I'd apologize for this taking so long to write but I know I will soon be apologizing again and you'll tire of that eventually, so I have to consider using apologies sparingly.

Hannibal had been meaning to refer Franklin for a while now. The simpering beta had squawked on about an imaginary relationship with Micheal Jackson for 30 mins straight today. Hannibal didn't even feel the need to make notes on the man now, his patient book empty for the last 4 sessions. If he had been a younger man the only thing he would've added to todays entry was an unhappy smiley face. And maybe a cartoon brie. Cheese people indeed.

It was only after meeting Franklins 'good friend' Tobias that Hannibal suddenly took an interest in the rotund man. Tobias was cold, detached in a way that only Hannibal could understand. He looked into the eyes of Tobias and saw himself staring back. Their 'chance' meeting at the opera had been fortuitous. Franklin's babbling faded into the background as the two men sized each other up.

Once Hannibal had dismissed Franklins presence, and therefore Tobias too, Mrs Komeda piped up and told Hannibal how handsome she found Tobias. Her mischievous eyes darting between Hannibal and Tobias himself across the room.

"I say Hannibal, he seems very interested in you." She teased. "An invitation to your next dinner party? Or something more intimate?"

"I can assure you I have no idea what you mean." Hannibal let himself smile. His person suit fixed firmly in place.

"You might have some fun Hannibal!" Ellen laughed. "Unless you're currently distracted? Your omega neighbour by chance?" She took an over exaggerated sniff and giggled. "I smell you're still aiding him in his hour of need."

“And now I can definitely assure you I have no idea what you mean.” He stated, his smile dropping. Did he really smell like Will? He had been so careful to separate their washing, to wash his clothing as soon as he had taken Will food. Had the omegas scent permeated his skin to the extant he could no longer smell it on himself?

“Is your poorly neighbour still need of your assistance my dear?”

“I would hate to violate his privacy.”

Ellen laughed again. She did love to tease so. Hannibal felt the corners of his mouth quirk up. Her ribbing was good natured, never from a place of malice.

“He must be quite fascinating to hold your attention for so long Hannibal.”

Hannibal hides his smirk behind a sip of his champagne. Yes, Will is fascinating. He’s secretive, protective, dark in ways that Hannibal wishes he could see. He does his best not to imagine Will bathed in blood again.

“He is quite interesting, yes.” Hannibal allows.

Ellen takes a sip of her own glass and eyes Hannibal over the lip. Her cheeks pink with mirth.

When Hannibal returns home late into the evening he goes straight to the kitchen for a glass of water. His evening had been slightly merrier with champagne than he had originally planned, Ellen Komeda’s company overcoming is normal restraint. The water is cooling to his throat and eases the slight flush to his cheeks. He feels uncharacteristically loose limbed.

The expensive champagne still pumping through his veins, his normal very level head feels slightly off kilter.

For some reason he decides to go down to the basement. He had fed both Will and Adam before leaving for the opera but in his relaxed state he feels drawn to the omega and his pup, the tightness behind his ribs pulling him down to the basement. The thread loosening with every step closer to the pair.

As he approaches the basement door he can hear the gentle humming of Adam. The pup only really making the sound when in distress. It's very late for him to be awake and Hannibal presumes Will is once again in the throws of a night terror.

When he opens the door however the bed is empty. Adam is sitting on the new rug Hannibal supplied a week ago. He has the toy car in his hand and is rocking back and forth gently.

Hannibal steps into the room and can see the bathroom door shut. He crouches down next to Adam. He doesn't need to ask, but feels it important to engage Adam often. He'll write off the urge to talk to the pup as drunken antics tomorrow. Right now he wishes to comfort the distressed pup.

"Where is your mother?" He asks gently.

Adam, nonverbal as always stops his humming and stiffens at the sound of Hannibal's voice. He wrinkles his nose and Hannibal lets out quiet chuckle, yes he supposes he does smell a little off putting, the champaign and later some wine would be unsavory to the pups delicate nose. Adam turns his head toward the bathroom and lets out a little whimper of distress.

"Thank you Adam, I'll see if he's ok." He reaches out and pats the pups shoulder. Adam doesn't flinch away.

Hannibal stands up, swaying slightly from the alcohol in his system and goes to the bathroom door. He leans his head against the cool surface, pressing his ear to the wood. He wouldn't want to disturb Will if he needs the privacy, unless the man was in need of him, he realizes.

The room sounds quiet except the sound of gentle panting. As Hannibal moves to open the door he hears Will retch and the sound of liquid meeting deeper liquid. Will is being sick. He waits until the sounds stop and taps on the door.

“I’m ok baby, be out in a minute ok?” Will calls through the door. His voice muffled through the barrier.

“Will it’s me, Hannibal”

The sound of fabric shifting and the toilet being flushed can be heard. Then the sound of a tap turning on, splashing water and a gargle.

Will slowly opens the door allowing Hannibal to see him finally, he’s pale and sweating slightly. The neckband and armpits of his t-shirt damp. He gives Hannibal a faint smile.

“I’m ok, must have been dinner.” He says quietly, eyes on Hannibal shoes. His shoulders are tense, his hands curled into small fists by his side. He’s on edge, nervous that Hannibal is in their room so late.

Hannibal steps back to allow Will the space to move out of the bathroom. As he passes Hannibal he brings his hand up to push his hair off of his forehead and that’s when Hannibal smells it.

Will’s scent. Under the jasmine and patchouli, the sweat and musk of Will is another gentle scent. It’s so subtle, like black tea, lemon drops, milk.

Hannibal has only smelled this particular scent once before. His mind begins to fill with images of warm soft hands taking his own smaller ones and placing them on a firm round stomach. Gentle whispers of ‘can you feel her?’ His childish giggle and excitement. ‘She’ll be here soon my love, all for you.’

Hannibal growls and grabs the top of Will's arm as he passes and spins Will around to face him. Will yells out in shock, his eyes coming up to look at Hannibal as he is pushed against the wall and crowded into it, Hannibal pressed firmly on top of him. He can feel the length of Will's body between him and the wall. He's shaking, his head turned to the side, neck on display. He lets out a small whimper as Hannibal pushes his face into that beautiful arch of pale skin and takes a deep breath in.

Will's first instinct is lash out, push Hannibal off of him. Hannibal can feel his muscles tense, Will's throat works, trying to keep his tongue silent. Hannibal runs his nose from Will's collar up the shell of his ear letting out puffs of warm breath on Will's flushed skin.

Finally Hannibal leans back. He doesn't release Will, his grip tight on the tops of his arms, forcing them to stay by his sides.

"Why didn't you tell me?" He growls, giving Will a little jolt.

Will says nothing. He looks at Hannibal tie, his creased shirt, anywhere but Hannibal's eyes. The scent of distress, fear, and pain from the omega has overridden the smell of his pregnancy but there's no hiding it now.

Hannibal shakes Will harder, knocking his head against the wall by doing so.

"Will!" He shouts. "Why?!" He rattles Will again, the omega letting out a whimper.

"What are you going to do?" He whispers. His voice even despite the tremors running through his body. "Please, give me pills, don't beat it out of me. Just pills. Please." He squeezes his eyes shut, blocking out Hannibal's glare.

Hannibal drops Will's arms as if burned. Will's words swirl around his brain. He takes a step back, then another. Will's legs give out and he slides down the wall to the floor, bringing his knees to his chest. He lets out a sob and rests his head on his knees. His shoulders shaking as he cries.

Hannibal lifts his chin and looks down at the man on the floor. His mind races with devastation at Will's words and the brutal truth of them. Then switches tracks and is enraged that Will would believe Hannibal is capable of such a thing. Beat the pregnant omega until he lost the pup. How dare he. Hannibal is nothing like those other Alphas. The ones who tortured Will, beat him, caused him to lose previous pups its seems by Will's own admission.

His mind swings from anger to pain back to anger again like a pendulum, one emotion overriding the other, then again, layering them on top of one another until the only thing he knows to do is shut them off entirely. Close the swirling emotions off, centre himself.

When Will looks up to Hannibal, he's standing perfectly still. His hands hang loosely at his sides. His breathing barely perceptible. The mask impenetrable. His expression completely deadened.

He knows he looks terrifying but Hannibal's brain has chosen self preservation. Later he will be able to pick the thoughts out as separate entities and analyze their existence. Right now he's too drunk and too overwhelmed to feel anything. He needs sleep. Or another drink.

Will's eyes dart around the room suddenly, frantically. "Adam?" He turns his head, looking under the bed in the corner, then back into the bathroom.

The pup is no longer in the room.

"No no no no no no!" Before Will can get his feet under him Hannibal has already reached the open door. He turns to Will as he closes it, his eyes catching Will's as he shouts Adam's name again. The omega panting, scrabbling to get his balance, half falling and half lunging toward the door as it clicks into place.

"Hannibal please!" Will cries out as the lock is turned into place. "No! Hannibal please! Nooo!"

Hannibal rests his forehead on the wood of the door and closes his eyes. He can hear Will screaming for Adam, hammering on the door, scratching, kicking the wood. Begging Hannibal to open the door, please, please open the door. Don't hurt him. Don't hurt my baby.

The screaming and kicking continues. Will frantic and panicking. Hannibal could open the door, let Will out to find his pup himself, but that gives them the chance to escape. If Will finds Adam before Hannibal can, he could run for the front door, get onto the street before Hannibal makes it down the stairs to stop him. No, Will can stay here, he will find Adam.

He takes a deep breathe and goes in search of the wayward pup.

dust bunny

Chapter Notes

Oh what's that? a new chapter already? Yes, yes it is. You're welcome.
Still no beta read, mistakes are mine, all miiiiineeee... my precious....

Hannibal Lecter, no, Count Doctor Hannibal Lecter is an extremely intelligent man. He's an educated man. An artistic man, creative, curious. He's dodged the FBI for 5 years now, not through luck, no, through just being smarter. He was Head Trauma Surgeon for 15 years. He has an incredibly successful and expensive psychiatry practice. He is a talented and creative chef.

And yet. Yet he cannot find a 5 year old non verbal escapee pup. He can't find him. And he's tried. Oh yes, he has tried. He has turned his home upside down. There are things in places that shouldn't be in those places and damn it tomorrow is going to be an extremely tedious day of tidying with a hangover but he can't find Adam. It's been 2 hours. And while Hannibal home is spacious, it's no *Reggia di Caserta*. Three floors of rooms, two guest rooms, a room filled with musical instruments, a storage room with antiques. Kitchen, dining room, lounge, den, office. No Adam.

He cannot keep count of the times he's looked under something for his head to swim once upright again, little black spots appearing at the edges of his vision.

He began his search on the 1st floor and worked his way upwards. Now, standing in his attic storage room he's frustrated, sweating, tired and cursing Adams name under his breath.

Hands on his hips he calls Adams name once more before calling defeat and going down to the basement for Will's help.

When he left Will 180 minutes ago, Will was screaming and pounding on the door. Now the basement is filled with silence. Hannibal wonders if Will wore himself out or, as he suspects, is ready to pounce as soon as the door is opened.

Hannibal puts his eye to the spy hole and can see Will sitting on the rug by the bed. His head on his drawn up knees. His arms wrapped around his shins, hands gripping the opposite elbow. He's made himself as small as possible.

As quickly as he can Hannibal unlocks the door and steps inside the room, closing the door behind him. Will doesn't move. Hannibal doesn't believe the ruse of apparent sleep and makes no step toward the man on the floor.

Before he can say anything Will lefts his head slowly, looking up at Hannibal. He makes eye contact.

Will's face is puffy and tear streaked. His fingers have blood on them from his scraped fingernails, after trying to claw his way out of the room.

Hannibal instantly and unexpectedly feels regret. The feeling is powerful and silences him for a moment. The omega on the floor looks utterly dejected, broken, hopeless. Hannibal sighs at the feeling in the pit of his stomach. It feels more real than the anger he felt earlier when Will assumed he was the same as his previous Alphas, that he would punish Will for carrying another pup. The feeling spreads from Hannibal's stomach up and out to his chest, his heart feels heavier than it has in years. It makes his head tingle and his ears burn.

Will looks at Hannibal's feet and takes in a deep breath. And what feels like barely a second to Hannibal, Will is off the floor and has jumped at him and he lands on his back on the floor, the action causing him to let out a shout as Will straddles his chest. The movement is so graceful, but quick, Hannibal has less than a second to process what has happened when he feels the first sting of the omegas claws attack his face.

Will is wild, growling, snarling. His sweat damp hair falling about his face creating a halo of tight ringlets. He is breathtaking. He brings his hand up again and punches Hannibal clean across the cheek and Hannibal's head snaps to the side, draws his fist back and does it again.

Hannibal can taste blood on his tongue, his lip split, his snarl filled with blood stained teeth. The scratches to his cheek sting. He grabs Will's wrist before he can strike him again, pushing the omega off of him, trying to stand up. Will undeterred by the forceful push leaps

once again at Hannibal trying to climb on top of him again but Hannibal moves to the side, crouching low to avoid the attack.

Will lands on his hands and knees, spins around and surges forward jumping onto Hannibal back, before he can turn to face him, forcing him down to the floor with his weight, his right arm hooking around the Alphas throat in a head lock.

Hannibal pushes himself up, his eyesight going grey as Will squeezes the blood flow to his brain, and flips them, landing heavily on the omega. Will cries out, his arm loosening from Hannibal's neck and Hannibal takes the opportunity to put some distance between them, standing and moving backwards, keeping his eye on the omega on the floor.

Hannibal gets a lungful of air finally and shouts "Will STOP". But Will doesn't stop. He's back on his feet, chest heaving, lunging again for Hannibal.

Hannibal is exhausted, his hangover already pounding in his head, his throat hurts, his cheek hurts. But Will is stunning in his fury, he can't help but admire the vision before him. Dark shadows whirl around Will has he tries to over power Hannibal again. This time trying to strike him in the ribs, pulling his fist back again and again, Hannibal blocks each attack except one that connects, he grunts as Will's fist impacts his ribs, then again in the stomach.

Hannibal doesn't want to hit Will, he realizes. His movements blocking only. Unfortunately he realizes the only way to stop Will is to subdue him. He lashes out and his fist collides with Will's jaw, the omega lets out a yell in anger at being hit and tries to wrestle Hannibal to the floor again.

Somehow Hannibal manages to get on top of Will once they roll and are forced to stop by the wall by the bathroom, Hannibal grabs both of Wills wrists and crosses them over his chest, holding him down.

"Will for gods sake!" Hannibal heaves.

Will is panting, his cheek already bruising. His eyes wild, angry, beautiful.

“Get off me you bastard!” Will shouts. “Get the fuck off me!”

Hannibal, his energy sapped, chuckles. He can’t help himself. This fight has been the most fun he’s had all night. His head aches, his jaw hurts. The hissing omega beneath him is delightful.

“Why are you laughing asshole?” Will demands.

“I can’t find him Will.” Hannibal sighs.

“What?” Will looks taken aback.

“Adam, I can’t find him. It seems I’m too old for hide and seek. He’s bested me dear.”

Will doesn’t react to the endearment, just growls and struggles a little more, but with no real effort. Hannibal tightens his hold a bit, squeezing Will’s wrist in warming.

“Can I let you go now? Are you done?”

Will nods and grunts as Hannibal moves off of him to sit back on his ass on the floor between his legs. Will raises himself up on his elbows.

“Are all the doors and windows locked?”

Hannibal looks at Will and nods. Will pushes himself up off the floor and stands, legs a little shaky. No real harm done. He looks a little breathless but otherwise ok.

Hannibal on the other hand is a mess. His normally neat hair in a fray across his forehead, blood on his cheeks and chin. His throat turning a deep shade of red from being strangled. His shirt ripped at the collar. He reaches his hand behind himself to lever himself up but when he raises his head Will has extended his hand to help pull him up. He looks at the hand warily, tilting his head to look at Will.

Will just tuts and huffs, giving his hand a little shake and reaching further forwards to help the man on the floor. With a grunt, Hannibal stands. If he holds onto Will's hand a second longer then needed then that's his business.

"Come on, we should find him." Will says walking out of the room, running a hand through his messy curls, pushing them off his sweaty forehead.

Hannibal follows him out of the room and leads them both up the stairs to the kitchen. Glancing at Will from the corner of his eye he watches Will take in the space around him. The omega frowning at the decor makes Hannibal smile to himself. He follows Will from room to room, Will only glancing around momentarily before deciding that Adam isn't in there.

On the second floor Will stops. He turns his head to the left and enters the study. Scenting the air he goes over to a closet and opens the door. He goes down onto his knees and there at the back behind a cardboard box is Adam, curled in a tight ball and fast asleep.

"I looked in here." Hannibal says coming up behind Will as he's on the floor pushing the box out of the way. "I swear I looked in here."

"Uh huh" Will smiles. "He's good at hiding. It's all he's ever known to do."

Will reaches in to take hold of his pup but he lays just out of reach. "I can't get him, he's too deep in there." He says standing back up and dusting off his hands on his sweatpants. He looks at Hannibal expectantly.

"Ah, yes, one moment." Hannibal says crouching down. Stretching his arm into the tight space he takes Adam under the opposite armpit and gently pulls the boy from his hiding spot.

Scooping the pup under the knees he stands. Adam whines quietly but stays asleep, settling in Hannibal’s arms, he small body molding into Hannibal's chest.

He feels so small against Hannibal and he closes his eyes, his breath catching in a sigh. Fragile bones, ribs expanding on a breath. He might hold Adam just a little tighter than he means too.

He turns to Will, who’s arms are extended to take the pup, Hannibal gives a minuet shake of his head and strides out of the study, Will following silently behind him.

Instead of walking back down the stairs, Hannibal takes a left out of the door and walks to his guest bedroom. He pushes the door open with his foot and moves over to the bed and glances down at it then back at Will who is standing silently in the door.

“Would you mind?” Hannibal asks, gesturing to the bed with his head, titling it to the side. Will doesn’t seem to know what to do for a moment. He’s clasping his fingers together nervously, shifting foot to foot.

“In here?” He whispers.

Hannibal takes a deep breath “Will” he sighs “This is where you’ll be staying now.”

Will looks around nervously. The room is decorated with a pale blue paint, with dark mahogany furniture. Desk, double bed, wardrobe, nightstand with Tiffany lamp. The window is large, overlooking the back garden outside, navy drapes frame the window. Given the hour the view isn’t much, just the tall dark trees, limbs swaying in the wind. The room is dark, lit only by moonlight streaming in.

Will’s face is uncertain, Hannibal knows he must be thinking this is a test of some kind. He’s glancing between Hannibal and Adam to the bed, to the window, a tremor going through his body. The ferocious, surly creature from the basement is no longer in the room with him. In the moonlight Will appears smaller somehow, maybe Hannibal thinks, he’s diminishing himself again, feeling worthless, maybe hopeless.

“Will?” He asks gently.

“I… ok” Will moves to the bed, his bare feet silently padding across the room. He pulls down the soft navy blue blanket from the pillows creating a space for Adam to be laid down.

Hannibal deposits the pup on the bed gently. The pulls the blanket back over him, tucking it around his shoulders. The boy lets out a soft sigh of contentment and Hannibal feels his heart thud hard, just once. He resists the urge to tuck one of the boys curls behind his ear.

“Its very late Will, I’ll see you in the morning.” Hannibal says quietly as he walks to the bedroom door. He pauses. “This door has a lock, I will be using it.”

Will nods and sighs. “Goodnight Hannibal.”

“Goodnight Will.” Hannibal shuts the door, the lock clicks into place.

A visit

Chapter Notes

its 11.30pm. there's gonna be mistakes im sure of it.
Sorry. Just point them out and ill fix them, maybe, I dunno.
oh and yes I did google what does Laurance Fishburne smell like...

Comments are life.

When Alana called Hannibal three weeks after he had moved Will and Adam to the upstairs bedroom it was to tell him she had passed his name and number to Special Agent Jack Crawford for assistance in a recent spree of murdered Omegas. He thanked her for the heads up, smiling to himself.

This was Hannibal's shot, a chance to sit within the walls of Quantico. Serial Killer extraordinaire seated at the tables of the Agents tasked to find him, The Chesapeake Ripper. Listen to their voices, feel the air change as they moved through the halls of a building designed to catch people like himself. Well, almost like himself. No killer had animated the FBI like he had, he has. He would be able to taste the desperation in the air.

Newspapers all over America had followed the story of his kills, his rise to fame. Listed on the top 10 most wanted people in United States of America. Online sites like TattleCrime had never let any of his tableaus go with just one article. Freddy Lounds knew what her readers liked, and provided article after article about his work. Sometimes with hastily taken photos, shots from within the growing crowd, or behind the backs of FBI agents at the scene. The most revealing images got the most revenue, the general public loved the bloodshed, the violence.

Their first meeting happened as he escorted Franklin through the patient's exit of his office. The Agent had almost filled the small space. His shoulder's broad, impressively tall, presence demanding. He had all the stereotypical presence of an Alpha, a man who took charge. His scent was one of cool crisp snow on a mountain top. Mint, rose tea and almonds, not overpowering. He saw Franklin shrink in on himself as the man stated his name and almost took the smaller mans hand mistaking him for Dr Lecter.

Unimpressed with the intrusion and mistaken identity, Hannibal put Jack Crawford in what could only be called a ‘Time out’ in his waiting room. While he waited, Hannibal pottered about his office, not doing anything of importance, only wanting to make the man wait.

When Hannibal let Jack into his office he could smell the frustration subtly coming from him. Jack was clearly not a man who liked waiting. And he wouldn’t have been if he had called ahead politely. Jack took in his surroundings, his eyes surveying the walls, the books, art, curiosities.

“This is a lovely space, very calming but interesting.” He said.

Hannibal nodded in thanks, “Yes my patients seem to like it, I spend so much time here I felt it needed a homely touch.”

“It’s very eclectic.” Jack said looking at the bookshelf along the mezzanine.

“Objects gathered on my travels and studies. How can I help you Agent Crawford?” Hannibal asked taking one of the seats that faced each other in the centre of the room.

Jack took the one opposite. A man who enjoys equality it seems, Hannibal noted.

“You have come highly recommended by a colleague of mine, Alana Bloom.”

“I was her mentor at Johns Hopkins. A brilliant Doctor. “ Hannibal smiled.

Jack nodded “Yes, she has been helping my team at Quantico for a while now, she’s entirely unique in her perspective.”

“She has a unique mind.” Hannibal said. “And has a strong head surrounding it.”

Jack laughed “That she does, she’s a great asset to my team.”

Hannibal waited for the man to continue. The silence not uncomfortable. Jack passed his hat from one hand to other, finding his words.

“I’ve come to ask for your help on a case. Dr Bloom feels you could aid us in finding our recent killer. He or she has been targeting Omegas. Dr Bloom has stated your work with difficult Alphas might help us to narrow down our search.”

“I wouldn’t be able to share any information about my patients of course.” Hannibal replied.

“Oh no, no of course not. But you have had patients that have been more inclined to pursue their secondary gender instincts?” Jack asked.

Hannibal shifted in his seat, crossing one leg over the other, straightening his pant leg with a sweep of the hand. All for show, he wanted to Jack to know he was an ethical Doctor, one who found talk of his patients troubling.

“Some of my patients in the past have explored their baser instincts in regard to their gender, yes, “ he acquiesced. “You presume this killer to be an Alpha?”

“We’re not presuming anything at the moment Doctor, just trying to gain as many perspectives as possible. Would you be willing to work with us?” There was a small look of hope in the agents eye, it was held there along with a determined expression. Jack had the face of a man who wasn’t said no to very often, but underneath that, the face of a man who hoped. Hoped to find his killers. Hoped to put bad men in jail. Hoped to do good out in the world. Hannibal wondered what he had sacrificed to do these good deeds. What weaknesses he had paved over in order to be the man he was. Head of The Behavioral Sciences Unit at the FBI.

Hannibal agreed, arranged a time for him to drive to Quantico, said a brief farewell and the Agent left.

Hannibal sat at his desk, he would normally be writing up his notes now of his last patient but it was Franklin and no more needed to be added to the man's diary of neuroses. He looked at the clock and decided to drive home.

The house was quiet when he entered. He removed his coat, shoes, placed his briefcase by them and took of his suit jacket as he entered the kitchen. Rolling up his sleeves he decided on a more elaborate dinner tonight, a small celebration in aid of being welcomed into the hallowed halls of the FBI. He rolled up his sleeves, donned his apron and began to cook. Forgoing his usual routine of writing out patient notes in the study. He would do them later.

The dinner was beautiful. He arranged his own serving on his finest china. Displayed with porcupine quills and the skull of a tiny bird. He left Will and Adams dinner to keep warm in the oven. He ate at his dinner table while Chopin filled the space around him. When he was done he placed his plate in the sink and plated up Will's food, adding a little extra now the omega needed more nutrients. Adams dinner was much simpler. The same roasted meat, but with a serving of steamed broccoli and green beans.

As he passed the study he picked up the package that had arrived earlier that week and tucked it under his arm.

He knocked twice on the bedroom door before he unlocked it. He heard Will standing up and Adam squeak.

He entered the room and closed the door behind him. Will stood by the window, there was a blanket tucked around his shoulders that he held in place with a trembling fist. A cushion on the window-seat. Adam was on the floor, drawing with his crayons.

"I'm glad to see you enjoying the view" Hannibal said, walking through the room to place the food tray on the desk. "The garden is lovely even this time of year."

Will opened his mouth to speak then closed it again. Adam stood and went to the desk. He looked at the offered plates of food then sat on the chair, he picked his broccoli up with his

fingers and started to chew on it. Will saw Hannibal's lip twitch at the sight.

"Adam" Will said as he joined the pup at the desk. He picked up a fork and tried to put it in the pups hand but Adam just whined and batted Will's hand away. "Adam please use your fork" Will tired.

He glanced at Hannibal now standing by the bed, placing the unopened package on the cover.

"It's quite all right Will. I'm sure he'll learn eventually."

Will sighed "I've been trying to teach him. He never ate with cutlery before we came here."

Hannibal nodded once and gestured to the bed. "This is for you Will. You may open it."

Will stayed where he was by the desk. Adam made happy eating sounds beside him. Eating his broccoli first. Wiggling his toes under the desk, his feet hovering above the floor. He rocked back and forth gently.

Hannibal looked up to see Will glancing around the room nervously. His fingers twitching by his sides, chest rising and falling in quickened breaths. He hadn't moved.

"Will?" Hannibal asked.

Will's jaw worked like he was trying to speak, the muscles in his face clenching. "What is it?" Will whispered finally.

"It's a gift' Hannibal said "A surprise"

Will's eyes widened at that and his gaze dropped to floor. His scent was souring again, fear, despair, but it seemed he was fighting it. The smell moving across the room to Hannibal in gentle waves. Will didn't want to be afraid, he just couldn't help it.

"Please, what is it?" Will rasped.

"Like I said" Hannibal pushed, "It's a surprise."

Will shook his head. His hands clenching into fists. "I don't like surprises" He stated.

Hannibal was unrelenting. How interesting. "I've given you things before Will. You will not be punished for accepting this."

"But what is it?" Will whispered again. Adam had stopped eating. His toes stopped wiggling. He made a small whine and put down the piece if broccoli he had been about to take a bite from. Will had begun to tremble again, small shivers wracked his body, shoulders to knees.

"Please Hannibal, please tell me what it is." he gasped. His brow furrowed, his fringe falling onto his forehead as Will looked resolutely to the floor. He let out a small whine.

Hannibal tilted his head and assessed the omega in front of him. Clearly Will had received a 'surprise' before. The word struck an instinctual fear in the man.

"It's reading material." Hannibal said.

Will shook his head again "B..but I can't-"

"To learn to read." Hannibal interrupted. Yes, it was rude to interrupt but he couldn't stand any more of Will's distress over something so trivial as a gift any longer.

Will's head snapped up, his eyes falling to Hannibal's collar.

"What?"

Hannibal picked up the package and finally opened it. He took out the letter of purchase and thank you note and laid the rest of the contents neatly on the bed. It comprised of three A4 sized booklets, roughly 30 pages in each, flash cards, a notebook, colored writing pens. Not a childish image in sight. This was designed for adults to learn. Hannibal had researched the company extensively before purchase, finding they had good reviews from both adult learners and teachers.

"There is no greater joy than to lose oneself in a book Will. The great thinkers of our time have had their words captured on paper, reading them sets them free. There is freedom in reading, Will."

Will took a tentative step closer, then another until he was beside Hannibal staring at the items on the bed.

"I don't understand…" He finally said after a few moments silence, staring at the booklets spread over the cover.

"I would like for you to learn to read." Hannibal said, he glanced at the Omega beside him. Will's tremors were subsiding. The fear receding. In its place Will's scent had become complicated. It was a mixture of trepidation, excitement, confusion. Pine trees and honey. Dusty sand covered rocks by an ocean.

At the desk Adam had begun eating again. He had finished all of his broccoli and was now eating his green beans, picking them up two at a time and eating them down to where his fingers pinched them, then placing the pieces he had been holding back on the plate, discarded. Hannibal noticed the little bits of green on the boys plate and made a mental note to add more if some of the bean is being uneaten.

"How is the sickness Will?, have you been taking your supplements?"

The segue in subject matter seemed to throw Will for a moment until he nodded his head and rubbed the back of his neck.

“It comes and goes, haven’t been sick today. And yes, I’ve been taking them.” He let out a deep breath.

Hannibal stepped back from the bed and made his way to the door. “Good, if it becomes bad again, let me know, I can make you some ginger tea.” He offered.

Will turned to him and nodded. His eyes firmly on Hannibal shoes.

As Hannibal began to close the door he watched as Will looked back at the reading materials on the bed a frown on his face. Hannibal had hoped that Will would embrace them. In Hannibal’s opinion, ignorance was not bliss. Ignorance was born of prejudice, of intolerance. But Will was not ignorant. He was a product of bad parenting, human trafficking, abusive Alphas. He was a man trying to survive. He lacked opportunity. Hannibal wished to offer him the type of freedom that didn’t potentially take Hannibal’s own freedom away.

He hoped Will would try.

Basket of snacks

Chapter Notes

Im so tired. This probably has loads of mistakes.

Thanks for the comments everyone!

Jack Crawford was an interesting Alpha. And an interesting man. Sitting in his office Hannibal took in his surroundings. The lighting was bright but not overly so. On his desk sat a photo of Jack and his wife in Florence, Hannibal recognizing the Ponte Vecchio. On the walls behind where Jack was currently sat were his awards, certificates of education and training, simple but expansive frames. On one far side of the office was a large board covered in photos of men and women. The murdered Omega's currently being investigated. Their smiling faces looked into the room, family photos covered the edge of the board, Christmas scenes, holidays, children being held by proud parents. In the centre of the board was a map with pins in, presumably where the Omegas were found once slain.

Hannibal stood in front of the board looking from photo to photo. All the omegas looked similar. Blonde, blue eyed, perfect teeth, stereotypically Omega. Delicate features and pale skin. They were all undeniably beautiful, even the male omegas were incredibly attractive, slim shoulders, clean shaven. Hannibal thought about the omega currently housed in his guest room. He was nothing like the catalogue perfection in front of him. Will was tall, broad, scruffy haired. Hannibal smirked at the idea of Will posing in front of a Christmas tree, smiling in matching festive pajamas, hands wrapped around a mug of hot cocoa. No Will was nothing like these traditional Omegas. He was stubborn, surly, prone to hissing and growling. More than anything Will was intelligent, resourceful. His lack of traditional education was truly a shame. But Hannibal could fix that, Will had already finished his first workbook of learning to read and was well into his second. He had asked Hannibal only yesterday if there were more levels to complete, his eyes alight with hope. Will's mind just needed the opportunity to grow and Hannibal was happy to provide that. He had already ordered the Level 2 reading pack and the level 1 mathematics pack to add to it. Even if Hannibal would never let Will go at least he would have an interesting conversation partner in the future.

Lost in his musings he was brought back to the room when Jack cleared his throat behind him. Hannibal turned to face him.

“What is the time frame?” He asked.

Jack frowned and looked at the open folder in front of him on the desk. “Two to three weeks between each one based on the rate of decay. Thats not when they have been found though. We found the first body roughly 3 weeks after it was dumped. A dog walker on an early morning walk lost their dog off trail and followed it. Found the body hanging from a tree.”

He stood as he spoke, making his way over to the board. He pointed to a photo near the top of the display. A body hung from a high tree branch, wrapped in what was once white fabric now yellowed from waste from the rotting corpse, red brown from dry blood. Rope wrapped around the ankles, held the body upside down. The effect was that of a cocoon, only the chrysalis inside would not become a butterfly.

Under that photo was one of the body on the slab with the sheets removed. Three weeks wrapped in fabric couldn’t hide the obvious disfigurement done to the omega. His eyes had been removed rather crudely, the sockets broken. His genitalia had also been violently cut off, the incisions jagged as though done with a saw.

Hannibal’s eyes traveled around the board again. The same brutality had been done to the other bodies.

“The killer is clearly angry.” Hannibal stated.

“But at whom?” Jack asked “The omega? Or what they represent?” Jack tapped a photo of the recently found victim. A male omega seated in a restaurant with a baby on his lap eating fries from his plate. The baby was pushing a fist of fries into his mouth, the omega laughing and nuzzling the pups head. “All the omegas had families, no criminal record, no illegal dealings at all. Upstanding families.”

Hannibal turned to look at Jack, this close he could see the fine lines around the man's eyes, the corners of his mouth. He looked tired and worn down. His scent had a faint tint of desperation to it. Jack was desperate.

As they spoke more on the status of the families, how many children they each had, what the husbands and wives did for a living, the door to Jack's office silently opened. A gentle tap tap broke their discussion and they both turned to see Alana standing in the doorway.

Hannibal smiled, Jack grimaced.

Alana stepped into the room and nodded to Jack. "Jack." Her tone was terse, unhappy to see him. "Hello Hannibal"

"I would say it's lovely to see you Alana but I feel that would be inappropriate given the circumstances." He gestured to the board.

She crossed her arms tightly and sighed. "Those poor families." Her brow furrowed in a slight frown.

Hannibal turned back to the board "What are the blue pins?"

Jack seemed to perk up, he touched a blue pin, then a red one. "Blue where they live and red where they are found. Theres no discernible pattern as far as we can tell."

"Do you think he's taking them from their home?"

Jack strode back over to his desk and sat in his chair, turning his laptop to face Hannibal and he stood with Alana by his side. "Oh we know he is. Here"

He tapped the track pad on the laptop and the screen woke up revealing CCTV footage on pause. The image was of a kitchen, a little grainy, a man stood at a stove paused mid stir of something in a large pot. Jack tapped the spacebar and the video started. Tinny cheerful music could be heard playing from somewhere in the room. A small pup in a baby walker moved into the frame and scooted to the man's feet. The man, presumably the dead omega, turned to look at the pup and laughed. "You a hungry grumble butt?" He could be heard saying. The pup garbled something then squealed shrilly and the omega laughed again. As he

turned back to the stove a door can be heard opening, it made a swish sound like a French door being pulled open. The omega's head instantly snaps up looking off screen. The omega starts shouting and grabs the pup from the walker trying to make an escape. What happens next can't be seen in the footage, there's a scream, the pup crying and screaming. A thud. Then silence.

Jack taps the space bar again, the video pauses.

"The pup was found in the hall, unconscious but ok. They're fine, had a bump on the head."

His focus solely on the small screen of the laptop, Hannibal can see what's happening, he can hear the omega's screams but what he feels is purely resting in his past. The tiny hand in his, squeezing his fingers until they hurt, the high pitched wailing filling his ears. His heart thumping in his chest, pushing his ribs painfully into the skin of his chest.

Hannibal doesn't realize how hard he's breathing until Alana touches his arm bringing back into the room. He glances at her and nods his head quickly, once.

She looks concerned "It's hard to watch, you ok?"

"Yes, thank you." He looks at Jack "Were they all like this?"

Jack nods. He pushes his laptop closed and opens another file on his desk handing it to Hannibal. "Unfortunately victim number four was alone taking care of the pups while her husband was out of town. The three year old and one year old pups were alone for 72 hours before the husband came home, they uh… they weren't in a good way when he found them. Some injuries." Jack didn't elaborate any further. Hannibal was grateful.

He thought about how Adam had survived alone in the house with Will chained in the basement. How the pup had been up in the main house for years, how close he came to being injured. The mechanic didn't appear to be a caring father or Alpha, starving them both, beating and raping Will.

Hannibal walks back over to the board. “Were the victims sexually assaulted?”

“Yes” Alana answers “Before and after they were killed.”

Hannibal turns to her with an eyebrow raised.

“They found semen in the wounds.” Jack says.

Hannibal tilts his head, sexual gratification gained from hurting others is something Hannibal cannot abide by.

“I’ll help you find this killer Jack.”

When Hannibal returns home there is a package on his doorstep. He picks it ip and sees the shipping label from the Adult Learning Company he purchased Will’s reading and mathematics material from. He heads inside and places the package on the kitchen counter. He takes off his coat and suit jacket. As he stands in the hall debating what he should do he realizes he wants to see Will and Adam. The screams from the video have been playing in his ears all afternoon, very quietly but there none the less. Instead of giving in to the feeling pulling him towards their room he instead enters his study. He convinces himself that he needs to tidy his desk, he needs to move the chairs in front of the fireplace a little, he needs to makes sure his files are in order in the cabinet, he needs to check all the books are in alphabetical order.

When all of these needs have been met he lingers in the doorway for a moment before finally giving into the pull behind his ribs and goes upstairs to Will and Adams room. He taps on the door politely, unlocks it and walks in. The scent that greets him is pleasant, relaxed. Hannibal feels the tightness in his middle begin to loosen.

Will is sitting on the window seat, his feet tucked under him, a blanket around his shoulders, a reading booklet perched on his lap. He looks up as Hannibal enters. From his spot on the rug Adam gives a small squeak. He's coloring a firetruck from a coloring book Hannibal purchased him. The firetruck is green.

"He's never seen a firetruck." Will says noticing Hannibal's attention drawn to Adam. He puts the booklet down and stands, the blanket falling from his shoulders. "Never seen anything other than what came to the garage."

"I shall purchase him some picture books." Hannibal replies. Will nods, scratches the back of his neck.

They stand in silence for a few moments, Will shifting from foot to foot, never still, never relaxed.

"Can.. I mean.. What…?" Will asks gruffly, Hannibal watches as Will's eyes dart around the room.

"I've come for your laundry." Hannibal lies.

Will frowns. "Its not Tuesday. Isn't it?"

Hannibal smiles. "No, but I heard you last night. Another nightmare?"

Hannibal did hear Will screaming in the night. His voice had rung out around 2am. He had been tempted to get out of bed and calm the omega but his screaming had stopped after a moment.

Will shifts from foot to foot again. "Yes" he whispers. He doesn't divulge any details, happy to keep the reasons for screaming to himself.

“Not to worry. If you can get the laundry from the hamper please?”

Will nods and moves toward the ensuite. As he does Hannibal walks over to the bed with the intention of stripping it. He goes around the bed as he tugs on the sheets to remove them from the mattress. Will disappears into the bathroom, the sound of the laundry hamper opening. As Hannibal leans over the mattress his shoe kicks something under the bed. Curious he bends down and reaches under the bed to find a box. Inside are the snack bars and raisin packets he has been adding to Will and Adams food tray, along with an apple and banana. He rises as Will walks out of the bathroom, arms laden with clothing.

“Will? What is this?” He asks looking at the collection of food.

Will crosses the room and dumps the clothing on the floor by the door. “Just in case. They’re just in case.” His tone is offhand, nonchalant in a way that seems false.

Hannibal raises his head slowly. Eyes connecting to Will’s as he drops the box onto the bed.

“Just in case what Will?” Hannibal asks, his tone forced into neutral. His face a blank mask.

Will takes a step back and wraps his arms around his middle, squeezing his elbows with the opposite hand. His shoulders begin to curl inwards, hunching up to his ears. His scent becoming sour.

On the floor Adam has stopped coloring, he closes the book and places the crayon beside it on the rug.

“In case of what Will?” Hannibal asks moving slowly around the bed towards Will who has taken another step back.

“In…in c..case..”Will stutters.

Hannibal moves swiftly, his shoes barely making a noise on the floor. He raises his hand with the intention of taking Will by the arm but the omega flinches, readying himself for impact. Hannibal's hand freezes mid air then darts out and grabs Will's bicep, squeezing enough to let Will know not to pull away, but not enough to hurt. Will yelps as Hannibal pulls him towards the door.

"Wait!" He protests. Hannibal ignores him and moves Will through the door, pushing him ahead of himself and closing the door as they enter the hallway. He marches Will down the stairs, who doesn't try to pull away, but isn't making it easy, his bare feet slapping on the wooden floor.

Hannibal drags Will into the kitchen and pushes him towards the pantry. Will turns around and tries to pull his arm from Hannibal's grip. "No, no wait please!" Will begs "Please Hannibal I'm sorry. I'm sorry!" His voice a hoarse whisper.

Hannibal doesn't reply as he opens the pantry doors wide and pushes Will towards the shelves. He grabs Will by the shoulders and turns him to face the contents of the cupboard.

"Look." He states firmly. "Look!"

Will lifts his gaze to the packages on the shelves. Eyes moving from product to product. There in the pantry are boxes and boxes of the snacks he has been providing Will and Adam with. Neatly stacked in rows. Raisins, crackers, protein bars. A basket full of apples. Bags of roasted peanuts, something Will had expressed a liking of a few weeks prior. Will tries to back away from the sight, overwhelmed by what he's seeing.

Hannibal stands directly behind him, his hands by his sides. Will presses against him, shaking his head. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry." Hannibal doesn't budge, he feels like a brick wall behind Will.

Hannibal takes Will's shoulders again and turns him to so they are face to face.

"You will never starve here Will." He says forcing the omega to look him in the eye with a little shake. "I am nothing like the others."

Will shakes his head trying to break Hannibal's intense stare. He squeezes his eyes shut. "I know" he whispers.

Hannibal lets go of Will's arms and takes a step back. "I am nothing like the others. I do not starve you. I do not beat you."

Will sighs, he opens his eyes and looks up at Hannibal frowning. "No. You don't do that." He glances at the kitchen counter. The reading material package sits on it unopened. "But." He says, reaching out and pickup up the package. "I am still your prisoner."

Will brings the packet up to his chest and wraps his arms around it protectively. The air sits heavily between them. The silence filling the space. Will hangs his head, his fringe falling over his eyes. He takes a tentative step towards the kitchen door, then another, and another.

Hannibal hears Will make his way back up the stairs, his feet padding on the floor gently. He hears the snick of the door to his room opening and closing.

Fromage

Chapter Notes

> I have so much admiration for writers who put so much detail into food. Describing it so beautifully, especially Hannibal fic writers, as it's so important to the character. I, on the other hand, cant be bloody arsed to do it. imagine it plated elegantly, something extravagant and bougie.
>
> Anywayyyyy enjoy this chapter. Not beta read as per.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tobias Budge proves to be interesting. After Franklyn blurts out that his so called friend has been saying ‘dark things’ including killing a man and playing him like a violin and the body of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra trombonist being found on the stage of a local theatre with the neck of cello forced down his throat, Hannibal was very interested.

Hannibal does his research and finds that Budge has a string shop in Baltimore, violins, pianos and of course, cellos. All for sale just a few minutes from Hannibal’s office. Hannibal decides he needs his harpsichord restrung.

Budge’s shop is quite lovely, set back from the main road in a converted two story Victorian house. As Hannibal enters he hears a violin being played, a lovely sombre tune and stops the shop bell ringing out as the door strikes it. Budge plays for a few more moments then turns the corner, surprised to see Hannibal standing amongst his various instruments.

He schools his features quickly, his mask falling into place, much like Hannibal’s own. After exchanging metaphors and false platitudes over the dead trombonist, Hannibal invites Budge for dinner. Hannibal puts on his best alpha charm and is met with the same alpha charm, like looking into a mirror.

The dinner invitation is accepted. And why wouldn’t it? A place at Hannibal’s dinner table is much coveted in both their social circles.

On the morning of the planned dinner, Hannibal heads up to Will and Adam's room with their breakfast, simple but filling porridge, fresh fruit, milk for Adam and juice for Will. Hannibal unlocks their door, steps inside and is met with the stale smell of sickness and the sour scent of stress. He thinks for a moment that Will's morning sickness may have surfaced again but looking at the bed he can see that Adam is tucked under the covers, tremors running through his small frame, his face flushed and feverish.

Will is sitting by his side running a damp wash cloth over his forehead and cheeks, saying gentle things and holding the pup's tiny hand.

Will doesn't take his eyes off the boy as Hannibal walks further into the room and sets the tray down on the desk. It's only as Hannibal approaches the bed that Will raises his face and looks to Hannibal's eyes. His own are red rimmed, likely from crying, the faint creases in the corners of his mouth are more pronounced from the small frown.

"I'll be right back." Hannibal says quietly walking from their side and going in search of his medical bag. He leaves the door open knowing Will won't leave his sick sons side. He returns a few moments later, the bag firmly in his grasp. Will stands and lets Hannibal take his place beside the pup on the bed. Hannibal lays his hand on the pups forehead gently to check his temperature. Adam squirms from the unfamiliar touch but stays where he's laying, too tired to move away, his eyes squeezed shut.

Hannibal doesn't make any placating or reassuring sounds. Will is aware of the mask Hannibal wears, he seen it slip. Hannibal has no need for his doctorly beside manner trained into him at Johns Hopkins. Will would see right through the facade. He stands silently, his arms wrapped around his torso, self soothing in a way.

Hannibal takes out his auriscope and looks into Adam's ears, pulls off the disposable cap and puts in back into the bag. He then reaches into the bag for a tongue depressor and stops.

"I'm unsure of how to proceed." He says with mild amusement. "I need to look at his throat."

Will shuffles forward a little and kneels down in front of the boy and takes both his small hands in his. Hannibal tilts his head as Will's shoulder then ribcage come into contact with his shin and knee, resting there, not leaning but close enough Hannibal can feel the heat from

Will's body through the fabric of their clothing. The tugging under his ribs flutters into existence very briefly. Will smells like a forest floor, fresh rain with a hint of sour worry.

"You'll have to be quick" Will rasps and lets go of the boys hands and gently turns his head in Hannibal's direction.

Hannibal leans down ready to look into the pups throat, his head coming level with Wills. He can smell Will's breath, it's minty, fresh from his morning routine. Their eyes catch. This close Hannibal can see the green flecks in Will's iris, like moss on unpolished lapis lazuli. The iris is now ringed in the thinest line of gold due to Will's pregnancy. As it progresses the line will get thicker, not quite covering up the blue but thick enough to be noticeable from afar.

From somewhere deep within the structure of Hannibal's Mind Palace a song begins to play, tinny and fading in and out, like something played on an old record player. He hears a woman's voice, warm and soft, caress his skin.

'See the omegas dancing, their eyes are ringed with gold, holding hands, the alphas cheer, they are maids no more'

He closes his eyes as the memory of sunlight spilling over golden curls seeps under his eyelids, the tinkle of a pup's voice joining in the song. When he opens them again, Will is frowning, but it's not with anger, Hannibal can smell the warmth of concern.

"You ok?"

Hannibal nods once and looks back at Adam's still closed mouth.

Will bends slightly closer to Adam and says "Show Hannibal your frog, Adam."

Adams mouth pops open for a few moments allowing Hannibal to see into it using a penlight. There's no need for the tongue depressor as Adam's swollen tonsils are very visible.

Hannibal straightens up and puts his tools back into the bag, he stands and beckons Will over to the desk. Will joins him after kissing Adam's sweaty curls.

"He has tonsillitis. He'll need antibiotics, which I can prescribe him."

Will scratches the back of his neck and huffs out a sigh of relief. "Ok, good, ok. Thank you."

They stand for a moment in silence, Will watching Adam sleep, Hannibal watching Will.

"A frog?" He asks.

Will shrugs "It's an old saying, it means you have a rough voice, my dad…" he stops and wraps his arms around his torso again. "My dad used to say I had a frog in my throat because I always sounded rough. Dry Louisiana air I guess." He shrugs again.

Hannibal regards him for a moment, he thinks Will's voice is quite lovely, raspy and gruff, no sign of the false tones of simpering omegas, Will's voice is honest, rough.

"When I was a child" he starts, eyes now on the sleeping pup "My father always said I sounded too old, my words too wise. He said I would make a great politician, or a foolish one."

He glances toward Will from the corner of his eye to see Will looking at him, his head tilted. His brow is furrowed gently, his lips pressed into a straight line. Hannibal can't discern his thoughts and moves to pick up the medical bag left by the bed. He stops and turns back to Will who is still looking at him.

"I am having a guest for dinner tonight."

“A guest?”

“I would like for you and Adam to be as quiet as possible. But seeing as Adam is unwell I doubt you’ll be making much noise.”

Hannibal goes to leave but Will makes a noise, somewhere between a grunt and the beginning of a word. He clears his throat, dislodging the frog.

Hannibal stops in the open doorway facing Will “Yes?”

“This guest… are they… like you?”

Hannibal as facetious as ever asks “A doctor?”

Will rolls his eyes and huffs, his eyebrows drawing up in a flat expression of exasperation.

Hannibal lets himself smile slightly, enjoying a moment of teasing. “You are quite safe Will.”

“That doesn’t answer my question.” Will states dropping his arms to his sides, his fingers twitching.

Hannibal leaves without another word.

Hannibal’s afternoon and evening are spent in the kitchen creating the meal for Tobias. It’s ornamental as is all of the meals he prepares for his guests but Hannibal feels this meal needs extra attention. He doesn’t believe he’s trying to impress the other Alpha just demonstrate his ability to create art himself.

Tobias arrives on time. Hannibal greets him at the door, takes his coat from his shoulders, the other man shrugging out of it elegantly and hangs it in the closet in the foyer. Tobias has dressed smartly, his suit plain but expensive. His scent clings to his coat as Hannibal hangs it neatly on a hook, smoke, chemicals from making his own gut strings, resin and wood polish.

Hannibal shows him to the dining room, with its wall of herbs and painting of Leda and The Swan hanging over the mantle. Tobias seems to be taking in all of his surroundings with a cool detachment. Hannibal doesn't take it personally, his home is just another mask after all, if Budge doesn't want to comment on it, he doesn't have too. He is after all there for another reason. Hannibal presents their meal with his usual flourish, Tobias is polite and thanks him.

Hannibal watches intently as Tobias lifts his fork, laden with the thigh meat of an unfortunate sales rep, to his lips, Hannibal lifts his gaze to see Tobias watching him back with the same intensity. He chews and swallows, never breaking eye contact until Hannibal does, taking a mouthful of his own plate into his mouth and savoring the taste.

"I apologize for being so blunt, Tobias, but I have to ask. Did you k*ll that trombonist?"

Tobias lowers his fork and smiles, the corners of his mouth tilting up slightly, his eyes are gleaming in the candlelight.

"Do you really have to ask?" He practically purrs.

"No. Do you intend to kill me?" Hannibal takes a sip of his wine, holding it on his tongue and gently breathing in through slightly parted lips, the smell and taste of the wine coating his palette. The scent of the Alpha in front of him deepens, woodsmoke fills the air, the man preening at Hannibal's attention.

"I was going to kill you." He states, taking up his fork again.

"Of course you were. I'm lean. Lean animals yield the toughest gut. What stopped you from wanting to kill me? Or have you stopped? " Hannibal asks resuming eating his dinner.

“I stopped after I followed you one night. Out of town.” Tobias leans in, pushing his chest closer to the table, his eyes never leaving Hannibal’s gaze. “To a lonely road. To a bus yard.”

Hannibal pauses, his eyes drop to his plate, his hand tightening around his knife.

“I'm not going to tell anyone what I saw you do and do well.” Tobias compliments.

Hannibal opens his mouth to reply when there’s a crash in the kitchen behind them. Tobias stands abruptly, his chair scrapping across the wood floor. “Who else is here?”

Hannibal, unconcerned, simply puts his cutlery down, places his napkin beside his plate and rises. “I have a guest staying, no one to concern yourself with, I’ll go see what he needs.”

Before Hannibal can leave the room Tobias takes a deep breath through his nose, scenting the air quite rudely.

“You have an omega here?” He asks angrily. “You didn’t tell me you were mated.”

Hannibal turns then, his shoulders squared. He tilts his head and exhales very slowly. “I am not mated. Will is a guest.”

Another crash from the kitchen, followed by a mumbled expletive makes Hannibal continue his journey to the kitchen.

Behind the island, crouching down is Will. The cupboard under the sink is open, some of the contents are on the floor, Will is half inside the space, his hands moving the remaining contents around.

“Will.”

Will jerks back, dropping what he was holding, and tries to exit the cupboard, banging his head on the door frame as he does. He raises to his bare feet, rubbing the back of his head.

“Adam… he’s.. he he’s been sick.”

“I’m not sure why that would need you to be under my sink.” Hannibal rounds the island surveying the items on the floor. Washing up liquid, scourers, a bottle brush, several storage tubs of cleaning materials, stainless steel cleaner.

“I was looking for.. my dad.. he would keep a bowl… for being sick, under the sink…” Will wrings his hands nervously.

“Ah, I see.” Hannibal says amused, he turns and makes his way to the laundry room, past the basement door and returns with a bucket. He holds it out for Will to take.

Will takes the proffered bucket gently, his hands shake slightly. “I’m sorry, thank you.” He puts the bucket down and kneels again picking up the discarded items on the floor.

Hannibal crouches beside him. “Not to worry, I’ll put these back.”

Will huffs a nervous laugh “I’ll probably put them back wrong.” He stands and rubs the back of his head again, his hand tousling his curls, then runs his hand to the back of his neck, rubbing there. “Sorry to disturb your guest.”

Hannibal finishes returning the cupboard contents to its rightful place and stands. He dusts his thighs of imaginary dust, Will’s eyes follow the movement then nervously tick away. Hannibal catches the pink blush that appears at the tip of the omegas ears.

“Come.” Hannibal beckons Will to follow him. Will grabs the bucket and follows Hannibal out of the kitchen into the dining room.

Tobias has taken his seat again, but hasn't resumed eating. As they enter he stands up, looking past Hannibal to Will who cowers behind him slightly. The omega standing behind Hannibal's shoulder, shielding himself from the other alphas scrutiny.

"Tobias, this is my friend Will. Will this is Tobias, he owns a string shop here in Baltimore." He gestures to the other alpha. Hannibal watches Tobias contemplate the omega using him as human cover. His face a blank state, his eyes betraying is clear distain for Will.

"A pleasure." Tobias says but makes no move to come closer and shake the man's hand.

Will's scent spikes with fear suddenly. Hannibal looks back at Will and see's he has made eye contact with Tobias and seems unable to look away. The bucket in Will's hands shakes gently, the handle giving away the movement with a quiet rattling sound. Will stays silent.

Tobias suddenly moves around the table, his steps loud on the parquet floor. Will shrinks further back behind Hannibal, Tobias stopping a few feet from the pair. His eyes narrow, his chin jutting up.

"It's rude to not answer an Alpha, omega." Tobias growls.

Will drops his gaze and his head, looking at the floor in submission. His breath coming out in quick huffs. "S.. s s sorry." He says quietly. His fringe falling into his eyes. His shoulders curl into his body, he grabs the bucket to his chest.

Tobias's view is blocked suddenly by Hannibal moving in front of Will, his broad shoulders pulled back, hands curling into fists by his side. A growl leaves his throat before he even realizes he meant to make a sound.

Will makes a hasty retreat out of the room, his bare feet padding up the stairs quickly. The bucket handle clanging on the lip of the bucket.

Tobias huffs derisively and leisurely returns to his seat, he picks up his knife and fork and resumes eating his dinner.

“Strange to see that omega in your home Hannibal.” He muses. “Considering where I saw him last.”

Hannibal takes a deep breath, centering himself and moves to the table, sitting down. He takes a sip from his wine letting the flavor fill his mouth before he swallows.

“Is that so.”

Tobias looks up, his eyes flashing with amusement “Oh yes. I knew his previous owner. Well, one of his previous owners.”

Hannibal cannot stop the snarl appearing on his lips. He puts his wineglass down before the urge to push it into the other alphas face can get its grip on him.

“You did not strike me as a man who partakes in illegal trafficking Tobias. It’s a shame really.” His tone accusing.

“And yet a trafficked omega is in your home.” Tobias is practically vibrating with glee. His eyes wide in mock surprise, his eyebrows raised slightly.

“I can assure you I did not buy Will.” He turns to look the Alpha in the eye.

Tobias swallows, the implications clear. He sets his cutlery down again, placing his hands flat on the table.

“I’m surprised you let him roam free. Did he tell you what he did to one of his owners?” Tobias tilts his head, his eyes hardening. “Not much left to identify the man. Face clean ripped off.”

“You seem concerned Tobias.”

“I would sleep with my door locked, that’s for sure.” Tobias presses.

“Let me walk you to the door.” Hannibal stands, his napkin once again on the table beside his plate. He pushes his chair back with the backs of his knees, moves around the table to stand over Tobias, the man confused briefly at the statement.

Tobias rises, his own napkin placed on the table. They walk from the room in silence, Hannibal confident enough to turn his back, knowing full well that Tobias is capable of attacking him. Hannibal hands Tobias his coat without offering to place it over his shoulders and opens his front door.

Before Tobias leaves he turns to Hannibal in the doorway. “I could use a friend. Someone who can understand me. Who thinks like I do and can see the world and the people in it the way I do.”

Hannibal pauses, he considers Tobias’s words. Looking the mans face over, he can see himself reflected in it. His dark eyes, cold, calculating.

“I don’t want a friend.” Hannibal replies and closes the door.

Chapter End Notes

Comment and kudos are life.
and how is this my longest chapter?
also... I liked Tobias. Awesome character, as was Franklin.

the truth

Chapter Notes

trigger warning for this one peeps. mentions of rape. stay safe.
if you want a summary of the chapter without having to read the hard parts just DM me.
love you all!

After clearing away the spoiled dinner, washing the plates and turning off the lights downstairs, Hannibal went to Will and Adams room. He didn't know why he felt compelled to check on the omega's well being but the tug was back behind his ribs, the fluttering deep behind his heart brushing against his spine, pulling and pushing him to take the stairs up to Will's room.

After a few weeks in their new room Hannibal had stopped locking the door. A tentative trust between them formed, Will knowing that Hannibal was dangerous and would find him if he tried to escape, Hannibal trusting that that information was enough to keep the omega in his home. Hannibal knew Will had no where to go, had no money and a pup to care for, pregnant with another, he was alone. He also lived with the fear of being found out for the murder of an alpha. A serious offense no matter the reason behind it. Will would lose Adam, and then his new pup, into a system that would not care for Adam's needs.

Hannibal tapped on the door gently knowing Adam would be asleep at this hour. Will opened the door a moment later and stepped back allowing Hannibal access. He entered the room, his eyes pausing on the bed as he looked around. Adam was tucked under the blankets on the bed. Over time the bed had become a nest of sorts, not quite as deep or plush as most nests were but Will had not requested any extra bedding or pillows so Hannibal presumed it was as Will wanted it. Adam's hair was spread wildly over the pillow, his thumb secured in his mouth. There was a faint tang of vomit and cleaner in the air, on the floor by the bed a small damp patch. Will had valiantly cleaned up Adam's accident and cleaned the area.

Will had retreated to the window seat, tucked in to the corner, his knees drawn up, arms wrapped around them. He looked small, unassuming. Hannibal was not fooled. Not an hour before Tobias had warned him of Will's ferocity, his ability to fight back if need be. He had been subject to the sharpness of the omegas claws himself. After his tousle with Will in the basement Hannibal had had to take a few days off from work to hide the scratches.

Before Hannibal could speak Will sighed and turned to him.

“He was right. That man. He was right.”

“About what Will?”

“About…” he sighed “About me killing an alpha. I did. I didn’t want to.” Will shifted restlessly, rubbing his shins through the soft fabric of his sweat pants.

Hannibal moved silently to the desk and sat. “You did what you had too. His life or your own I presume.”

Will nodded. Taking a deep breath he straightened up, leaning back against the wall, his head tipping back exposing his pale neck. Hannibal felt a shiver form at the base of his spine, traveling up to his neck, pricking each of his ribs as it went. Will cast his eyes to the darkness outside. It occurred to Hannibal that Will never closed the drapes in his room, never shut out the world outside even when all he could see where the stars on a clear night. Hannibal took his fill of the sight of Will’s skin, his neck unmarked with a bonding bite. He wondered how many Alphas had come close to sinking their teeth into that delicate flesh, binding Will to them forever. His internal alpha growled at the thought of another biting into Will and claiming him as their own. Hannibal crossed his leg at the knee, his pressed pant leg riding up to reveal his ankle, Will’s eyes drifted to him at the movement, then back to look outside to the darkened garden. Ever on alert Hannibal mused.

“How did you do it?” Hannibal asked.

Will’s frame suddenly stiffened. His shoulders rising slightly, his eyes going wide. He glanced at Hannibal from the corner of his eye.

“How do you do it?” He countered.

Hannibal smiled, the corners of his mouth lifting, pleased with the comeback. Will's verbal sparing was always a pleasure.

"Propofol. Injected into the neck when accessible. Or suffocation to the point of unconsciousness when not."

Will turned to look at Hannibal fully then, his brow furrowed in a frown. He hadn't expected Hannibal to answer so honestly. He took a deep breath in through his nose and licked his lips.

"They're not dead when you bring them here?"

Hannibal leaned forward in his chair, resting his elbows on his now uncrossed knees. The lamplight cast a shadow over his face as he whispered "No."

Will turned back to the window unable to keep eye contact with him. He was quiet for a moment then let out a quiet chuckle. The sound was one of surprise, no hint of bitterness or fear. Hannibal sat back again pleased with Will's unpredictable reaction.

"Of course not. Where would be the fun in that?" Will said after a beat. "And the meat will be fresher if harvested here."

Hannibal felt like he had been punched in the gut, the air left his lungs in a whoosh, his diaphragm sinking in trying to expel oxygen he had no more of.

Will turned to him again and Hannibal was struck with the glint in his eye. The pride he felt having known something Hannibal had no idea he knew. Knowledge is power and right now Will had an abundance of it. It made him radiant. Hannibal's jaw fell open slightly as he tried to fill his lungs again without gasping like a hooked fish raising out of the water.

"Oh please" Will scoffed "You're not the first Alpha to feed me people meat Hannibal."

Hannibal tilted his head and felt a surge of anger pulse though his limbs, the knowledge that another alpha had already given Will a taste of something considered immoral, that Hannibal provided his guests as a type of petty corruption, watching them consume the in-consumable, eating the flesh of their fellow man, an act he took great pleasure in, someone else had got to Will first was enraging. His scent or posture must have changed as Will's eyes suddenly widened and he pushed himself back against the wall again, turning away, his head falling forwards in a display of submission.

"Is that why you killed your alpha Will?" Hannibal whispered.

Will raised his head again and frowned, his eyes not quite meeting Hannibal's, focusing instead on the elaborate knot of his tie.

"No… no" he shook his head, his curls bouncing with the movement. "He… " He paused trying to find a way of explaining. "We…"

Hannibal waited. He tried to calm is irrational anger with knowing that Will had already eaten human meat before living here in his home. He considered all the firsts that he would never have with Will, consuming human flesh, a pup, and at the more basic level his first heat, his first knot. His first kill. Was there nothing left to experience for the first time with Will? Then Hannibal remembered himself. He was not just a man of baser needs, of instinct, a slave to his second gender or the monster that lived within his skin. Hannibal was a cultured man, he attended the opera, he wrote medical papers that were published in well respected journals, he wrote music. He created beautiful food. He read, he travelled. He was part of the higher echelon of Baltimore society. This he could show Will.

But did he want to? Will was not supposed to be here. Nor was his pup. Will had been an unfortunate accident. And Hannibal struggled daily to see the truth of it all. Sharing his home with the omega and his pup wasn't a happy affair. His laundry routine had been turned on its head, his normal detergent replaced with a scent dampening alternative after a few comments from his patients that they could detect Will's scent. Even his personal shampoos and soaps had now been replaced with scent blocking alternatives, anything to stop the gooey eyed looks from grandmothers at the supermarket watching him fill his shopping cart with childish food, a good alpha indeed.

Hannibal was a stubborn bachelor, his routine had been established for years, the comfort in knowing the predictable movement of others so that he may partake in his extra curriculum

activities. And here Will sat, fully aware of Hannibal's secondary life. The one he honed and nurtured, the one that ran rings around the head of the FBI, a man who had sat at his table completely blind to Hannibal serving him human. Will, scarred, vicious, hissing and protective Will, who not only knew of Hannibal's alter ego but didn't shy from the truth, only from the fear of being turned away, of being hurt again.

Will seemed not to have noticed Hannibal's internal struggle as he opened his mouth and spoke again.

"He made me call him Red Dragon."

Hannibal shook himself mentally. "And behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth."

Will shuddered. "Fucking Blake. He read that shit to me all the fucking time."

Hannibal chuckled. He sighed "Did he breath fire Will?"

Will shook his head gently and licked his lips "I felt burned with every breath he took, and consumed by flames as he took his last."

Hannibal could see Will now, standing over the body of a dragon, violently slain, drenched in blood, Will shining and victorious, crimson pools at his feet, his chest heaving, his eyes wild.

"How did you do it?" Hannibal asked again.

Will paused, considering his words. "With my hands." He said.

Hannibal smiled again. Exquisite boy. "I imagine it was intimate."

“It was desperate. I was desperate.”

“And yet you didn’t escape trafficking.”

Will shot him a look filled with heat and fury. “No.” He gritted out.

“Did you run Will?”

Will shook his head.

“Why not? With the Dragon dead you could have left, escaped to a life of freedom.”

Will ducked his head down again, submissive, defeated. “We weren’t alone.”

Interesting. “Did your audience celebrate the fall of the Red Dragon?”

“They… they uh..” Will closed his eyes, his breath stuttering in his chest. He looked pained, his hands clenching into fists. “They didn’t expect it for sure.”

“What did they expect?” Hannibal asked, leaning forwards again in his chair.

Will snapped his eyes to Hannibal, his mouth set in a firm downturned line “They were waiting for their turn to rape me. He invited them over. Three alphas, to watch, to take turns.” Will scent was suddenly filling the room. Sour, bitter burnt autumn leaves, angry waves of salt water signaling the coming of a storm. “He’d done it before. I couldn’t, I couldn’t take it again. I knew what they were there for.” He pushed his hands through his curls, giving them a tight tug.

“Will…” Hannibal started.

“No!” Will whispered harshly. “No, you wanted to know Hannibal. You like playing these games, break me down, thinking you can build me up again? No. You want to know the truth. The truth is he raped me in front of them. Knotted me. Kept me there with them looking at me. Waiting for their turn to get their knot wet. When… when he pulled away I took my chance. They thought it was fun. They laughed as I hit him, dug my fingers into his eye sockets, pushed them into his brain. They thought he was playing. When he didn’t get up they realized. I’d killed him. I don’t remember what happened after. Time didn’t make any sense. I woke up in chains.”

Adam whined in his sleep, a sweet soft sound of distress, his thumb falling from his lips. Will got up then and walked over to the bed looking down at the sleeping pup, his movements stiff and jerky.

“Being good. Being submissive. Being a good omega. It made no difference.” He looked over his shoulder as he spoke. “It made no difference. Fighting back didn’t change anything either. Do you know what it’s like to exist in a space that has no defined boundaries? Be good, get hurt. Be bad, get hurt. The only thing that has been constant in my life is pain.” He took a deep breath and let it out slowly.

Hannibal stood, he walked up to Will and stood by his side, watched Adam turn over in his sleep. The bucket beside the bed was empty.

“I will never hurt you like that Will. I promise you.”

Will shrugged. “Maybe not. But there are other ways of causing me pain.”

Hannibal nodded and turned to leave the room. As he pulled open the door, he turned to Will still standing by the bed.

“I will never hurt Adam.”

It was Will's turn to nod now, his eyes raised to look at Hannibal's collar. "I know. Goodnight Hannibal."

"Goodnight Will." Hannibal left, closing the door behind him.

He went to his room to get changed for bed. It was too late for a shower, he could have one in the morning. He thought about Tobias and what the man planned to do now. He knew what Hannibal was capable of, and who he had in his home. If he wanted to he could go to the police, tell them Hannibal had a trafficked omega in his home, one who was scared and covered in scars. Clearly abused.

But Hannibal also knew what Tobias was. He could tell Jack he what Franklin had told him. Breaching patient confidentiality to possibly save lives was a line Hannibal was willing to cross, to save face at least. Warm him to the FBI throwing them off his scent as a killer himself.

Or he could wait. See how the game played out. Wait for Tobias to come to him again.

As he laid in bed, his silk sheets tucked under his arms, his room covered in darkness, Hannibal's last thoughts we of Will. Naked, bruised, covered in the blood of the Great Red Dragon. His eyes glowing with the riotous victory of vengeance. He was transcendent.

Squeak and cough

Chapter Notes

crawls out from under a rock with the words 'Christmas' painted on it .... Hello...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal isn't left long to wonder about Tobias Budge's next movement. When the alpha enters his office while he's in session with Franklin, there really is no other choice than to kill him. Budge knows about Hannibal's extra curricular activities, knows about Will. Budge admits to killing two police officers that came to his shop to question him about the dead trombonist. Hannibal had been very sincere with his suspicions about the man to Jack Crawford, feigning guilt over breaching patient doctor confidentiality.

Franklin's eyes bulged at the sight of Tobias in Hannibal doorway, his shirt covered in blood. The beta had practically no sense as he tried to talk Tobias down from his murderous rage. Tobias smelt like bonfire embers and sulphur dioxide, a just struck match in an empty room.

Unable to listen to Franklin's inane rambling any more, Hannibal comes up behind him and snaps his neck. The beta crumples to the floor with a dull thud.

"I wanted to do that." Tobias growls.

"I saved you the trouble." Hannibal replies smoothly, taking his handkerchief from his pocket and wiping his hands of Franklins neck sweat. He places it back into his breast pocket.

"You told the FBI about me, didn't you."

"You have been reckless. You knew they would come for you eventually."

“I wanted them too.” Tobias’s over confidence borders on arrogant but Hannibal can understand that. Walking the halls of the FBI has been rather thrilling on occasion, especially when the topic of The Chesapeake Ripper has been discussed. Jack had even asked Hannibal his views on his alter ego and Hannibal had been happy to provide, even happier to listen.

“What do you plan to do now, do you know?” Hannibal asks.

“I plan to kill you, go to your home and take that filthy Omega. Put him in his place.” Tobias growls.

“You will do neither.”

The air becomes thick with the scent of both Alphas tuning into their inner beast. Tobias’s eyes flash red, he growls.

Neither man moves. Tobias reaches into his pocket and produces a length of cat gut which he starts to spin, creating a high whistle as it whips through the air. It’s an interesting but very fitting choice of weapon Hannibal thinks.

Tobias slowly steps towards Hannibal spinning the metal garrote, his movement agile, a beast stalking his prey.

Hannibal smirks, this man, no, this pup thinks he’s actually going to win.

Tobias swings the garrote and it wraps around Hannibal’s wrist as he raises it to defend himself. The metal wire is sharp and cuts into his suit and skin beneath, a superficial wound. He pulls his wrist towards himself, cutting his skin deeper but pulling Tobias off balance. He swings his arm and punches Tobias in the face, knocking him off his feet.

Tobias recovers quickly and kicks out at Hannibal's shin. Hannibal switches his stance making the strike useless. Tobias growls again, becoming impatient and stands as Hannibal steps back giving him the space.

Hannibal know's he has to make this fight look brutal. Killing Tobias quickly will make him appear suspicious, he doesn't need Jack Crawford knowing he has the potential to kill someone without provocation.

So he allows Tobias to get a few punches in, strikes to his face look more dramatic and Hannibal's lip splits as the fight becomes more violent. He tries to get his scalpel from his desk but Tobias is a little quicker and pushes the blade into his thigh, giving it a nasty twist as he does.

Hannibal uses his body weight to push Tobias off of him into the ladder, he moves behind it knowing Tobias will try and strike him through the rungs. Predictably he does and Hannibal grabs his wrist and yanks Tobias's arm, breaking his elbow. Tobias arm hangs limply by his side useless as Hannibal strikes him in the throat, crushing his trachea. Tobias struggles to breathe and rips to his knees as Hannibal retrieves the elk statue from a plinth behind him. He picks it up with his pocket square and slams it into Tobias's head, killing him.

Hannibal pockets his handkerchief and pulls the plinth to the floor. He looks about the room. Chairs are over turned, his desk has been moved, papers scattered everywhere. It looks suitable enough he thinks. He goes to the bathroom by the patient exit and inspects himself in the mirror, his hair is messy, his suit ruined, bloody lip and forehead, his eye will blacken quite nicely. Yes, that will do.

He calls Jack Crawford. The call is short, Jack barking out orders to his team before he hangs up. Hannibal sits in his desk chair and waits.

It takes four hours for Hannibal to able to return home. Jack takes his statement. Twice. The EMT's shake their head and are visibly put out that Hannibal refuses to got to the Hospital, he allows them to stitch the wound on his leg, butterfly stitch his forehead, wrap a bandage around his wrist.

Hannibal can feel Jack trying to understand the situation, he seems to be struggling with the idea that Hannibal, a mild mannered psychiatrist has the capability to take down a younger, violent alpha. Jack mumbles something about not judging a book by its cover. He looks especially tired. The Omega Killer hasn't struck again as far as they know, but they have no more leads. He makes Hannibal go over his story one more time before he allows him to get his keys and drive himself home.

As he opens his door he can hear Will in the kitchen, plates being washed, water running. In the last few days he has allowed Will more freedom in the house. While both Will and Adam spend a majority of their time in their room, having Will make his and Adam's lunch or get snacks has taken some of the domestic strain off of Hannibal and he is grateful. Will even offered to prepare Hannibal a packed lunch of sorts but Hannibal turned it down when he saw the offering of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. He will teach Will to cook one day, once Will can learn to read more proficiently.

Hannibal drops his keys into the bowl on the sideboard by the door and steps out of his shoes. It's when he takes off his coat that Will appears in the doorway, a frown on his face, his brow furrowed slightly.

"You smell hurt. Are you hurt?"

"I had an altercation with Tobias Budge. In my office." Hannibal answers, his voice strained as he hangs his coat on the hook.

Will suddenly looks nervous, tapping his thigh, he looks towards something in the kitchen.

"Did you… is he…"

"Not to worry, he is dead." Hannibal states simply. He begins to walk towards Will, a slight limp from the wound on his leg and Will looks like he's going take Hannibal's arm, the movement so awkward and stunted, his arms coming up to reach for Hannibal's forearm as he gets closer then he drops them. He steps back instead, allowing Hannibal to pass him and go into the kitchen.

Hannibal realises that Will was looking at Adam sitting at the kitchen island on one of the bar stools. Coloring book and crayons spread out in front of him, a half eaten sandwich on a plate next to the crayons.

Will suddenly rushes past Hannibal and grabs a glass from a cupboard by the sink and fills it with water. He turns to Hannibal holding the glass out for him to take. Hannibal pauses then takes the offered water, drinking the glass in full. Will holds out his hand expectantly and Hannibal gives it back to him. Will then refills it and puts it down on the counter in front of the empty stool next Adam.

“Did you go to the hospital? You smell like blood.” Will asks.

Hannibal sits on the stool beside the pup and uses his uninjured leg to balance himself.

“No need, a few stitches, that’s all.”

Will nods, accepting Hannibal knows what’s best for himself.

“I can cook dinner for you, you can rest.” Will is shifting from foot to foot, he’s scent not quite distress but edging on upset.

“I’m fine Will.”

“I don’t mind, really.” Will insists. “I’ll work out one of your fancy recipes, make you something you like.”

Hannibal looks Will up and down as he’s standing by the sink, he’s clearly nervous, anticipating some kind of reaction from Hannibal, but he’s not sure what.

“Whats happening Will?”

Will's head snaps up, his eyes going to Hannibal's collar. "What?"

"You seem to be expecting something to happen, you're fidgeting." Hannibal tilts his head.

Will balls his hands into fists and puts them in his pocket, closes his eyes. Then slowly forces his legs to be still, his breathing to calm. It's quite mesmerizing how Will forces down all that energy and is still. He would appear calm to someone who didn't know him. But Hannibal does know Will. That nervous energy is only being suppressed, it's not gone. Will is scared. His scent betrays nothing though. This is a scene that Will has practiced many, many times. Probably in a kitchen, probably for an Alpha who is fresh from a fight.

Adam, sensitive, sweet Adam, places his crayon gently down on the counter and puts his hands on his lap, his eyes downcast.

When Will opens his eyes he makes as close to eye contact as he can, Hannibal's eyebrows. His face is blank, no emotion. His mouth a straight line, his forehead smooth.

"I just want to help you." He whispers.

"I appreciate that." Hannibal replies.

Will stands perfectly still. He waits for Hannibal to say something. To move, to stand. Hannibal doesn't give him anything.

"Please." Will whispers again.

"I am not sure what you want to happen Will."

Finally Will's gaze drops to the counter Hannibal is sat at. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. "Francis…" he pauses "The Red Dragon, he.. he would fight. In underground fighting rings. The fights were brutal. Men died. After, he would come home and need.. taking care of." Will grimaces.

"Did this happened often?" Hannibal pushes, finding himself eager to hear Will share more of his past.

"Yes."

"I do not require the same Will."

Will's hand drifts to his stomach, almost unconsciously. There is still no sign of his pregnancy. No bump or swelling. Will's lean frame has gained a few pounds since coming to Hannibal but he's still thin. The clothing Hannibal has provided are loose fitting, hanging from his frame like a child wearing hand me downs from an older sibling.

"I would cook for him. Feed him by hand. Then… he would force me to…"

Will brings his hand up to join the other, low on his stomach, placing them over one another protectively. Hannibal feels a flush on heat rising up his spine. It's hot, he clenches his fist on the counter top. The feeling is similar to the heat of his fight with Tobias, it settles then, low behind his ribs. It feels like anger, but that's not quite the right word for it. Betrayal would be closer. But Will has not betrayed him.

Hannibal closes his eyes as the feeling sweeps through him again. In his Mind Palace the gentle tinkling of a woman's voice, whispering praises can be heard. He isn't the subject of the praise he realizes, they are for someone else.

Hannibal opens his eyes and finds that the word 'jealousy' fits the feeling pooling behind his heart. *Jealousy*? Thats new. And for what? He would never find gratification in forcing an Omega to obey sexually. So what then?

The room is silent except for Adam's crayon moving gently over his coloring page, the boy resuming his play. Will has returned to his normal self. Twitching and fiddling with his cuffs. Hannibal watches Will's hands as they pull and tug at the frayed edges of his sweater. And he knows. He is jealous of any alpha that Will has taken care of.

An alpha Will has fed. By. Hand.

He wants to scoff at himself. How ridiculous, to be jealous that Will has debased himself for another man, no, an Alpha, and fed them by hand. Food he cooked, took time over, broken into chewable sizes then pushed them past the lips of someone else, to be consumed and nourished.

Hannibal stands as gracefully as he can with four stitches in his thigh.

"The only thing I require Will is a bath." Hannibal smiles gently. "I can smell myself. It's unpleasant."

Will lets out a breathy laugh, relief settling on his face. "Ok."

Hannibal turns to leave the room then pauses. "A cup of tea would not go unappreciated. If you are amenable?"

Will raises his eyes and peers at Hannibal through his thick dark lashes "I can do that." He sighs.

"Thank you, Will."

He heads upstairs to his room to run himself a bath, the injury to his thigh pulling with every rise and fall of his leg. In his room he takes off his ruined suit jacket and places it on his bed, mourning the loss of the bespoke item. His waistcoat and shirt are next. The waistcoat is fine except a few dots of blood which Hannibal can remove himself. Perhaps he can take the waistcoat to his tailor and get the suit jacket and pants remade in the same material.

He enters the ensuite and sets the tap running. Then removes his pants and undershirt. The pants are also ruined. He surveys the work done by the EMT to his leg. The stitches are small and even, the scarring will be minimal. Looking into the mirror he can see his eye is blackening more, the skin becoming a deep shade of plum. The butterfly stitching to the cut on his forehead was more of a precaution than a necessity, the injury very shallow. The image helped convince Jack of his physical vulnerability, so he mentally thanks the EMT for being over zealous.

He turns to the bath which is filling and pours in some tea tree oil with chamomile to help relax and heal his wounds and bruising faster.

Before the bath is full there is a gentle tap to his door barely heard of the water rushing from the taps.

“Come in” he calls.

He waits as he hears Will’s bare feet padding on the floor, the quiet rattle of a teacup on a saucer.

“I made you some…” Will makes a strange sound in the back of his throat. Like a squeak or a cough.

Hannibal confused by the noise, turns round to see Will standing in the middle of his room. His eyebrows are raised comically high on his forehead and mouth hangs slightly open. His eyes take in Hannibal, feet to hair, delaying on their journey at Hannibal’s chest, then dart quickly away. He swallows. A deep rose blush fills Will’s cheeks and the tips of his ears that poke out from his curls. His chest is raising and falling quickly. The smell of the bath oils dulls under the scent of Will filling Hannibal’s bedroom as Hannibal steps closer to him past the door of the ensuite.

“Thank you Will” Hannibal rumbles, taking the cup from Will’s trembling hands.

Will head jerks into an approximation of a nod. He swiftly turns and shuffles out of the bedroom, his hands curled into tight fists by is side.

Hannibal smiles after him and sips his tea.

Chapter End Notes

Oohhhhhhhhh hehehe
Comments are life, Kudos is food.

Curious.

Chapter Notes

> Longer chapter this time. I couldn't decide where to break the story to make two separate chapters that didn't make the first half super boring. So I haven't cut it. Have a stupidly long chapter as treat you greedy little goblins. I love you all so much.
>
> Quick edit to make something a little clearer...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Victim number 6 of the Omega Killer had Hannibal back in the office of Jack Crawford a few weeks later. The bruises on Hannibal's face and ribs had healed, his reputation as an honest and stalwart Alpha had survived.

Looking at the photos of the latest victim Hannibal was struck again by how similar they all looked. Images of perfection when alive, broken and brutalized when dead. This omega had also been found wrapped in white sheeting, hanging by her ankles from a tree in a park frequented by young lovers after dusk, plenty of benches and hidden corners.

By the labs analysis this victim had only been dead for 24 hours before being discovered. Missing persons report had the FBI underlings busy, searching for the name of the poor omega now dead on a table in the basement.

"I'm sorry you've been brought in to look at all this, Hannibal." Alana nudges Hannibal's shoulder gently with her own as they stand side by side in front of the cork-board covered in dead omegas.

"I'm more than happy to help you Alana," He turns and smiles "and the rest of the FBI of course."

"Every new death makes me feel more and more inadequate." Alana sighs.

“Plucking the name of the murderer out of thin air isn’t one of your many talents?”

Alana lets out a breathy laugh, her head falling forwards, the dark sweep of her hair falling from her shoulder with the action. Her cheeks fill with a slight blush.

“I hope Jack hasn’t stopped you from recuperating from that nasty business with Tobias.”

“Not at all.”

The sound of the office door opening is followed by the rush of footsteps and muffled talking from the students and Agents in the hall as Jack enters his office. His footsteps firm and confident as he strides into the room. The sound fades as the door closes slowly in its hinges.

“Ah Doctor Lecter, thanks for coming in.”

Hannibal and Alana turn together, Hannibal nodding his ascent. “I see your killer has struck again.”

Jack pulls out his office chair and sits with a heavy sigh. Hannibal can see the strain around Jack’s eyes, fine line that signal to the world how weary he is. Under his normal scent of mint leafs and almonds, Jack’s scent had a heady mix of burnt rubber. Jack was stressed. If Hannibal could feel pity now would be the time.

Alana gently touches Hannibal’s arm as she passes him to take a chair opposite Jack. Hannibal takes the seat beside her.

“The ORO have finally got back to us.” He opened a thick file and pulled out page after page of Omega profiles. “All of them.” He sighs. “All of them are from the registry.” Jack wipes his hand down his face and huffs.

Hannibal reaches out picks up the first on one the stack Jack spread across his desk. It matches a victim on the cork-board. The woman is younger, her hair shorter. Her profile states she was sold six years previously. She doesn't look unhappy in her picture, just young and a little naive.

Alana had taken up a profile too and was scanning the page. "Could the killer be someone working at the ORO?"

Jack shakes his head, "All of this information is available publicly. Not in this detail of course, and no home addresses, but that doesn't mean that information isn't easy to find."

"Your killer could be accessing the information illegally. Or stalking his intended victims, then checking on the system their status with the ORO." Hannibal stated. "Are there any similarities with the victims? Date purchased? The amount of financial compensation?"

"No" Jack sighs again. "Register dates, ages, economic status, all different. The only thing that they all have in common? They all seemed happy."

Alana makes a small sound of sadness and frowns at the image in her hand. "We've already discussed they could be killings of jealousy. An unhappy Alpha in a loveless marriage. Or a beta jealous they don't meet the requirements for an omega partnership."

"We need to check with the ORO if they have a list of denied applications Jack, someone turned away a few times from purchasing an omega." Hannibal suggests placing the profile back on the desk with the others. "Being denied something one coverts could arouse feelings of inadequacy in someone with an unstable mind, lead them to lash out and harm the very thing he wants."

"If I cant have it no one can?" Alana asks.

"Exactly."

Jack nods, then does so again more enthusiastically, sitting up straighter in his chair “That’s a good idea, I’ll get an agent on it.”

_____

As Hannibal escorts Alana to her car after the meeting with Jack, she bumps his arm good naturedly with her shoulder.

“You look well.”

He looks down at her fondly. “Thank you, I’m feeling much better the past few days.”

Alana nods. “Are you going to go back to your office soon? Don’t rush yourself, it was very traumatic what happened with Tobias.”

Hannibal knows here is an opportunity to play the victim. And what a performance it had all been. Police statements, photos of his injuries, taking time away from work to ‘recover’. He had half expected Alana to appear at his door with chicken soup and a blanket. Apparently Jack had slightly exaggerated his injuries to the team and Alana, who called him as soon as she heard, offering to come to his home and take care of him. He had turned her down of course, he didn’t need a nurse or anyone to mother him. And he didn’t need Alana in the house with Will walking around.

He holds the door open for Alana to passes through first and they make their way across the carpark towards Alana’s car.

“I shall be returning to work on Monday. My office has been thoroughly cleaned. And my injuries have healed enough.”

They stop at her car and she turns to him, one hand on the roof of her car, her briefcase in her other hand.

“Your office wasn’t the one who took someones life and almost got killed Hannibal, it might have been the scene of the event but you were the one who suffered emotionally.”

Hannibal tries very hard not to sneer at her well meaning patronization. He must not catch his features in time as Alana puts her hand on his arm to gain his attention.

“I don’t mean to question your ability to take care of yourself or know your own limits. But ‘a Doctor who treats themselves has a fool for a patient’ as the old saying goes.”

He meets her eyes and sees only fondness and caring there. Overbearing yes, but well intentioned. He takes her hand from his arm and holds it with both of his own.

“Thank you Alana, I am quite well. I think I need to return to some normalcy. God knows how bored I am at home.”

She laughs gently and grips his hand, giving it a small squeeze before he lets it go.

“Thank you for your help today, with the case.”

“It’s my pleasure."

She smiles at him once more then unlocks her car. He steps back and holds her door for her. Hannibal waits until she’s buckled in and pulling away to make his over to his own car, parked a few spaces away. He unlocks the door to the Bentley and gets in.

Standing in front of his full length mirror in his closet, Hannibal ties his bow tie. Tonight is the opening of an exhibition at the Baltimore Museum of Art. The early work of Matisse. And while Hannibal has never really been interested in the artists work, this current exhibition is of his World War One etchings and promises to be quite the social event. As a patron to the arts in high society Hannibal is expected to show up.

He knows there will be interest in his short break away from his work, Freddie Lounds had covered the story of Tobias Budge dying by Hannibal's hand in her own uncouth and gruesome way. National papers had then picked up the story, Hannibal's face plastered all over page 5 or 6.

There had been some well meaning letters from acquaintances, the odd phone call, a note through his door.

He will use tonight to show he is quite capable of defending himself and stay a gentleman. A true Alpha. No doubt he'll be thrown some simpering Omegas in the process, parents pushing their offspring his way, look how strong he is, how rich, how educated.

He straightens his waistcoat, tie and pocket square, and puts on his dinner jacket. Black of course, the pocket square a rich ruby red to match the red threads weaving through his dark grey tie. His shoes are polished to a high shine.

He makes his way downstairs and can hear Will and Adam in the kitchen cleaning up after their dinner. Hannibal isn't sure what the ingredients of 'Fish Sticks' are but Adam had enjoyed them, the pup putting on enough weight to plump his thin cheeks out a little, his stomach rounding out. Hannibal doesn't feel proud at the sight of the pup and his mother becoming healthier while in his care. Nope. Not at all.

Hannibal stops in the kitchen doorway and silently observes Will at the sink, his back to the room. He's talking, as he normally does when alone with Adam. The sound of water and soap, plates being scrubbed. Lately Hannibal has found himself moving around his home louder than normal. His tread so light he has caused Will to practically jump out of his skin

when he's turned to see Hannibal in the room with him. As amusing it had been the first few times, for it to happen every time had become distressing for Will and Hannibal had had enough of Will's glare and sour scent. The memory of his furious stare makes Hannibal's lip curl up in a smile. Will was truly lovely when he was angry.

"Did you want something Hannibal?" Will asks without turning round.

Hannibal strides into the room, adjusting the watch on his wrist. "I'll be home before midnight."

Will turns to look at Hannibal then, soap suds up to his wrists. He looks Hannibal up and down, eyes never quite reaching Hannibal's face, they stop at his collar. "Ok" he says gruffly, his eyes narrowing.

Hannibal nods to them both and leaves the kitchen. He goes to the foyer and takes his coat out of the coat cupboard. He hears Will pat gently out of the kitchen following him.

"You're in a good mood."

Hannibal gives him a small smile. "I am."

Will lets out a small huff through his nose. "Any reason why?"

Hannibal doesn't answer, he puts his coat on and takes his keys from the bowl on the side unit.

"Good evening Will."

He leaves before Will can reply, closing the door behind him and locking it. While he knows that Will would not try to leave, to leave his door unlocked would be suspicious to his

neighbors, and some of them seem to spend a lot of their time twitching their curtains, eager for some gossip.

———————-

The gallery exhibition is somewhat interesting, if a little boring in Hannibal's opinion. This opinion he keeps mostly to himself of course, not wanting to seem uncivilized. He's spent the last hour listening to rumors of his own involvement of Tobias's killing, half amused and half horrified by the outlandish stories passing among the upper throng. At one point he heard that he had taken on Tobias *and* Franklyn who had both brandished samurai swords mid fight.

Setting these gossipers right had drained most of Hannibal's patience and he found himself wishing for a glass of something stronger than champagne and the silence of his study. The only relief came in the shape of Ellen Komeda who had sidled up beside him and given him a conspiratorial wink.

Hannibal was currently being subjected to the brash rumbling of Mr Nastri, an overweight Alpha who's money is hereditary, leading the man to buy his way into standing as CEO of Business Elite, a Fortune 500 company he bought and is currently blathering on about to anyone who is near him. Although Hannibal gained a fortune from his parents passing, most of his wealth is from his hard work and education. A dedicated trauma surgeon and now a dedicated psychiatrist.

Mr Nastri's nasal voice grates Hannibal's nerves and he contemplates how diseased the alphas internal organs are and if he did kill him would there be anything worth harvesting. Behind him a new voice breaks through the din and Hannibal's hackles immediately raise.

Across the gallery a very loud obnoxious man enters the room with two body guards beside him. Hannibal recognizes him as Mason Verger, heir to the Verger Meat Packing Dynasty and renowned arsehole. Hannibal had the displeasure of making his acquaintance last year at the Opera. Mason was a disgusting excuse for an Alpha, sleazy, rude and all round pig. Ironic considering his company's main export was in fact, pork. He looks as wildly disheveled as he did then, his short blonde hair sticking out at old angles on his head, His pale blue eyes wide with manic mirth, suit pale grey, tie bright red, wearing a white fur coat over it all.

Mason scans the room and Hannibal is too late to look away and he catches his eye. Mason marches through the small crowd and stops in front of Hannibal, his face stretching into a manic grin.

“Doctor Lecter!” He doesn’t hold his hand out and Hannibal doesn’t offer is own.

Mr Nastri makes a small sound and excuses himself from the pair. Hannibal is suddenly envious of the man.

“Mr Verger.” Hannibal replies.

“What is all this then?” Mason sweeps his arm around the room, “Care to give me the tour? You’re very knowledgable in the arts, I would appreciate your expert eye.”

Mason’s lips stretch into a shark grin as he eyes Hannibal again.

“It would be my pleasure Mason.” Hannibal as polite as can be. He makes his way to the back of the gallery and motions toward the first etching in a section of battle images.

“This etching was one of the first-“

“Yes! Fascinating! But enough of that Dr Lecter” Mason interrupts. “What I really mean to ask is if you might have a space for me. You know…”He rolls his wrist “in the patient variety. You see…”

He moves to Hannibal’s side and dares to put his arm around Hannibal’s shoulder, attempting to squeeze him. It’s an awkward angle as Mason is roughly four inches shorter than the older man.

“The judge you see, has seen fit to send me to a psychiatrist as part of my…” He purses his lips, “punishment for my recent indiscretion.”

Hannibal allows the touch and raises his eyebrows.

“Oh just a silly thing really, orphan boys and stables and all that nonsense. Anyway. I agreed to the terms of therapy in order not to go to the big house.” Mason fakes a shudder and grins again.

Hannibal manages to shrug him off this time. He straightens his suit jack, smoothing down his lapels. “I will check my appointment book for you.” Hannibal replies sternly. As much as Hannibal hates Mason Verger this will be an interesting venture, his manipulations folded into the shallow creases of Mason’s brain could prove entertaining to say the least.

Mason produces a business card from his pocket and dangles it from his outstretched fingers. He offers it to Hannibal who takes it and places it into the inside pocket of his dinner jacket. Hannibal suddenly feels dirty, stained by Mason’s company. He debates leaving the gallery entirely to rid himself of the man’s company when Mason turns on his heel suddenly and departs, no word of goodbye.

Rude.

_____-

By 10pm Hannibal was quite done with the exhibition and returned home. The house was dark and quiet. This of course didn’t mean Will wasn’t still wandering around. The omega found comfort in the dark, having spent many years hidden away he was often found in the kitchen or study after Adam was in bed asleep, sitting by the fire reading his coursework or looking through photo books of the world.

Hannibal had given Will permission to take any book he was interested in and the collection of photo books had peaked Will’s interest indeed. Glossy images of far away countries,

mountains, great rivers, forests and cities, all unknown to Will, had the omega looking wide eyed at the images before him. Sometimes they would discuss what he was looking at, Will asking intelligent questions, Hannibal answering in kind.

Hannibal had realized that Will was not, by any means, stupid. Although he didn't know how to read when he arrived did not mean he was unable to learn. His mind was sharp, absorbing the information offered to him like a sponge. Hannibal could see Will's mind processing the facts Hannibal gave him, often returning to the conversation with more intriguing questions. Their conversations lasting well into the night.

Will's thirst for knowledge was unquenchable, with Hannibal often being the one to retire first for the night, bidding will goodnight as the man sat in the chair still pouring over the images before him.

He found Will in the study tonight. Sitting by the fire in his favorite chair. Hannibal had refrained from sitting there once he realized Will was prone to sitting in it. Not wanting to taint it with his own scent.

Will sat with his knees curled up, his feet tucked next to the arm of the chair, a photo book of Norway on his lap.

As Hannibal walked further into the room, the lamp light becoming brighter he saw that Will had fallen asleep, his hand holding his head up, his elbow resting on the arm of the chair.

Hannibal stopped and studied him for a moment. The firelight cast shadows on the Omega's face, highlighting his straight nose, sharp jaw. There was a slight sheen to his brow from the heat. The scars on Will's face stood out against the paleness of his skin, glowing slightly orange and yellow, the flames flickering as they burned down. Hannibal imaged what Will had looked like before the pain of being tortured had made its mark on his fragile skin. His alabaster skin, unblemished, innocent. Will wore his life story all over his body. Scars made by knives, rope burns, cigarettes, the uncut claws of a rutting alpha.

Will had told Hannibal that the first Alpha who bought him after Gerald's son sold him to traffickers, only did so because he was a virgin. That man took his virginity during his rut, breaking the omega's arm in the process, the neck guard he forced Will to wear the only thing stopping him from bonding. When the Alpha had come too from the three day rut he had

beaten Will with a chain when he found that he'd broken a tooth on the plastic neck guard, claiming it was Will's fault for tempting him.

Hannibal quietly took his sketch book from his desk drawer and sat in the chair opposite Will. Pencil would do for now to capture the slumbering Omega, charcoal later. Although the idea of a fresh face Will was enticing, Hannibal would draw Will as he was now, scars and age lines, fluffy curls, slightly too long but lovely nonetheless.

Will let out a small sigh in his sleep, followed by a gentle whine. Another disturbing dream then. Hannibal had refrained from waking Will since his move to the upstairs bedroom when he suffered a nightmare. The omega glaring at him the next morning for daring to enter the room uninvited. And honestly they were so frequent, Hannibal would not get any sleep if he roused himself enough to dress and walk down the hall. So instead he let Will's pup calm him, the child probably doing a better job of it than Hannibal could.

Now though, with Adam upstairs unable to hear his mother's distress, it was Hannibal's turn to wake the man curled up before him.

Closing his sketch book, his drawing of Will to be finished later, he put the book back into the desk and squatted beside Will's chair, not wanting to loom over the man as he woke him from the darkness behind his eyes.

He shook Will's shoulder once, gently, and Will's eyes snapped open, sucking in a deep breath, his head shooting up, his shoulders curling inwards as he turned to face Hannibal on the floor.

"Mason." He whispered.

Hannibal tilted his head inquisitively. "You know Mason Verger?"

Will shrugged off Hannibal's hand that was resting on Will's shoulder still and sat up straighter in the chair.

“You stink of him.” He sneered.

Hannibal stood then, running his hands habitually down his suit jacket. He took his seat back opposite Will and waited. His eyes gleaming in the fire light. Well, this was interesting.

“Unfortunately I was subjected to his attention tonight at the Gallery, he was enquiring after my services.”

Will rose an eyebrow and stared into the fire. “Services.”

“He has been told by a judge to see a psychiatrist. He wanted to know if I would see him.”

Will’s head whipped round to stare at Hannibal instead. His eyes meeting Hannibal’s, searching, analyzing. When he found no lie there, they dropped to his collar instead.

“Mason will not be an easy patient, Dr Lecter.”

“I imagine his mind will be as dull as his personality. But I am curious.”

Will stayed silent. His fingers pulling at the thread of his t-shirt as it rest on his lap. His brow furrowed into a deep frown.

“How do you know Mason, Will?”

Will huffed. His face twisting into a disgusted grimace. “How do you think?”

Hannibal hummed in reply. “He bought you.”

Will gave a jerky nod. “Me, others. There were three of us. One of them was special though.”

“Special?”

“Ever wonder what happened to Margot Verger, Hannibal?”

Hannibal sat forward minutely. His interest piqued. “Mason told police she fell into a pig pen, was eaten a live by the very creatures that made her fortune.”

“That bastard.” Will spat, his cheeks pinking in anger. “That fucking bastard.” Will looked up realizing he had sworn. “Sorry.” He said sheepishly.

“Quite alright.” Hannibal allowed.

“To Mason we were toys. Toys to be used and broken. He took great pleasure in breaking Margot. She was…” He swallowed. “She was fierce to the end. Trying to protect me.” Will suddenly looked drained, exhausted by the memories coming to the surface, creating words to describe the images in his own mind.

“What happened?” Hannibal said gently.

Will looked up sadly then, his face the picture of grief. His eyes had begun to tear up, they glistened in the firelight.

“Mason, he got me pregnant. He kept us in a cage, together, three of us, in the basement of his mansion. Me, Margot, and Matthew. He treated Margot the worst, raping her, beating her. His particular brand of torture for her was, well, it was degradation. Humiliation.”

Will slumped back into the chair, wrapping his arms around himself. Hannibal observed the self soothing action.

“I didn’t show for months. And when I did Margot and Matt would offer themselves up to protect me. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn’t. “ he shrugged. “When I was due Mason suddenly took an interest in me. Kept goading Margot to hurt me, beat it out of me. Kept saying how worthless she was for not having the ‘Verger Heir’, that my baby was a going to have to be the next best thing.”

Will stopped talking. Lost in his memories. Hannibal waited patiently, letting the scene play behind Will’s eyes as they glazed over, tears gently falling from his chin.

“When the baby was born, Mason was so furious. It was a girl you see? Couldn’t be the heir to the fortune, as set in their father’s will. I named her..” Will’s voice broke. His throat constricting. “I named her Emily.”

Hannibal stood then and retrieved the tissue box from his desk. He sat again and held the box out for Will. He glanced at Hannibal briefly and took a tissue and wiped his face.

“He a few weeks later and took her. Snatched her right out of my arms as I slept. Margot fought so hard for me. She tried to take the baby back, stood in the way, screamed and screamed. Mason.. Mason grabbed her by the hair and threw her to the ground.”

Will paused again. And Hannibal realized he had closed his eyes, the memory of a new born pup screaming as it entered the world, joining and mingling with the screams of his mother as she gripped the sheets on her bed.

As Hannibal opened his eyes, Will started again. “It took them three days to remove Margot’s body from the cell. Matt and I, we covered her with our blankets. Tried to hide the smell. It, it didn’t work.”

Will was staring at the fire again, the flames having burnt down to gentle embers. The pale orange light fading from the room.

“Mason hated me even more after that. He raped me once more before selling me. To…” his voice trailed off, the only sound in the room the popping of the dying logs in the hearth.

“Who did he sell you too, Will?”

Will looked up then. “To the mechanic.” He whispered.

Hannibal’s eyes drifted to the doorway of the study, then up the wall, the stairs behind in his minds eye, to the door of Will and Adam’s room.

“Adam, he's Mason's son.” He said looking back at Will.

Will nodded again, then covered his face with his shaking hands.

Chapter End Notes

Whaaaat? noooooo.... oh my ghaaaad.

Osso Buco

Chapter Notes

Hey gorgeous, thanks for stopping by, I feel like this chapter is huge but mostly filler. Sorry about that.
Stuff happens in the next chapter but we had to like.. get to that bit... so yeah.
Kisses for you though my little poppet!

Mason Verger sits opposite Hannibal squirming in the chair. His suit, while expensive is gaudy. Blue and brown pinstripe, blue shirt, brown waistcoat. His hair like always, is scruffy, glasses perched on the end of his nose.

Hannibal stays calm, one knee crossed over the other, as the Alpha before him pulls a distasteful smile, all teeth and no feeling. Hannibal quickly realized that this particular expression on Mason's face was no smile at all but more a snarl. Using this 'smile' to openly challenge other alphas and face no consequences.

Mason has been in his company for 17 minutes, and even if he didn't know that Mason had abused Will so terribly, he would still wish to serve him up on a plater. Unfortunately he knows the recreational drugs Mason pumps his body with on the daily have already spoiled the meat, as it were. His liver and kidneys shriveled, his heart valves filled with fatty tissues, constricting his arteries.

To consume Mason would be to elevate him. And Mason doesn't deserve that. Sometimes a pig is inedible.

Mason has been dribbling on about the fat layer of a healthy pig since he sat when Hannibal decides to poke the beast.

"Tell me about Margot, Mason. I understand she passed away a few years ago."

Mason snorts, it's ugly. "She was a silly silly girl Doctor Lecter. Met her end in a silly way."

"You were her twin, it must have affected you deeply." Hannibal pushes.

Mason narrows his eyes, then throws his hands up and an exasperated shrug. "We never really got on you know, she was an omega. Defective though."

"How so?"

"She hated alphas Doctor Lecter, hated them! Imagine!" He grins again.

"You believe because she was an omega she should love alphas?"

Mason leans forward on his chair "She loved other omegas" He says in an overly loud whisper, the slumps back in his chair.

"She was only attracted to people of her own secondary gender?" Hannibal uncrosses and recrosses his legs the other way. "Theres nothing wrong with being attracted to those of the same gender, secondary or not."

Mason Verger blows a raspberry, like a toddler, then grips the armrests of the chair, making the leather creak. "It's useless loving someone of the same gender Doctor Lecter, how are we to get pups that way?" He laughs.

"Perhaps she didn't want children." Hannibal tilts his head. He watches as Mason appears to go blank. His face expressionless. He holds Masons eye contact as the other man gives a strange twitch then appears to come to life again, his face breaking out into his shark like grin again.

"All omegas want pups don't they? Thats what they're made for. With their silly minds all soft."

“Would you like pups?” Hannibal feels like he’s pushing now. Mason twitches in his chair again the rises, he begins roaming the room. He moves to Hannibal’s desk first, flipping the cover of a notebook and frowning when he finds it empty. He picks up Hannibal’s pen, the Mountblanc Meisterstuck, platinum, twirls it in his fingers then places it down. He then walks over to Hannibal’s drawing table by the fireplace. He lifts the smudge proof paper covering a charcoal drawing of Castle Lecter, bathed in moonlight, crumbling. He leans in and sniffs the drawing as it lay on the table, the rights himself, allowing the wax paper to fall back down, covering the drawing once again.

Hannibal watches all of this from his chair awaiting Mason’s answer. Mason finally relents once he reaches the fireplace, his back to the room.

“I need an heir. To the fortune. A Verger pup.”

“You have enough money Mason, surely you have omega’s interested in you, even if not for love, then for security.”

Mason straightens his back, the movement is slight but it speaks volumes. No matter how much Mason could pay an omega to be with him legally, none have ever accepted his proposals. Hence keeping omega slaves. No one publicly wants Mason Verger.

“Papa was very clear about where his money goes Doctor Lecter, only a Male Alpha can carry the title of Verger. I am the last.”

Something flickers in Hannibal’s stomach, its small and feather light. The sadness of knowing he is also the last of his lineage. Count Hannibal Lecter the Eighth. Then, nothing. Like the ruins of his castle in Lithuania, his lineage crumbles every year Hannibal does not take a mate and sire pups. It’s an old feeling, this grief, knowing years ago that he would let the name die off. Let the Lecter’s finally be washed away in time. Forgotten. With no intention of ever being caught for being the Ripper, Hannibal’s name will fade away.

“You’re still very young Mason.”

Mason turns then. His eyes travel from Hannibal's face to his shoes then back again. His expression inscrutable. He returns to his chair opposite Hannibal, crosses his legs in a reflection of the man before him, knee over knee. He even puts his hands, clasped together, across his stomach, as Hannibal has them.

"How disappointing it would be to sire anything other than a male alpha, Doctor Lecter."

"You can't control biology Mason." Hannibal replies.

"When breeding pigs, my Papa was very talented in selecting the best of the litter. He only bred the finest specimens." Mason's eyes glow as he leans forward. "Do you know what he did to the useless runts?"

Hannibal blinks but doesn't reply.

Mason moves his thumb up to his throat and pulls it across in a jerky motion while making a loud snorting sound then laughs hysterically, slapping his own knee. "Papa, what a great man. Slit the throat then feed it to the rest of the litter. Pigs will eat anything Doctor Lecter."

"Pigs ate your sister did they not?" Hannibal stands checking his watch. "Our time is up."

Mason's laugh fades as he watches Hannibal cross the room to the door, taking Mason's coat off the hook then crossing the room to the patient exit. He sits for a moment longer then stands and dusts his jacket front of invisible dust. Hannibal's question falling to the carpet with it.

"I'd like to see you again Doctor Lecter, I feel lighter somehow. Maybe therapy is all it's cracked up to be." Mason says as he takes his coat, his shark grin spread across his face.

"We can make this your weekly appointment." Hannibal opens the door to the patient exit and gestures to the space between the inner and outer door.

“Yes! Yes, good. Cant wait for it.” Mason says as he exits the room.

Hannibal closes the door. He crosses the room and opens the windows, pulling the lace curtains back and tying the fabric with concealed hooks behind the main drapes. The room needs to be aired. Mason’s repugnant scent lingers in the air, Hannibal wishes he could blow his nose to clear it from his mind. He will need to add another day to his cleaners schedule to come after Mason’s appointment each week. The smell of old blood, expensive cologne bought for its price and not to compliment the alphas natural scent, pig feed and underneath it all, so faint Hannibal knows only he can smell it with his hyperosmia, is the smell of angry, frightened Omega.

Five years after killing his own sister, of torturing and selling Will, it seems Mason is still up to his old tricks with omega trafficking. Hannibal wonders if Will knows the fate of his daughter. Mason clearly indicating that a female pup, regardless of secondary gender was non viable. Useless he had said.

Hannibal returns to his desk, leans forward and places his hands flat to the surface. After a moment he reaches for his pen but doesn’t find it. The Montblanc isn’t there.

———————-

When Hannibal returns home later that afternoon, he foregoes stopping in his study to write out his patient notes. Instead he heads to his bedroom to shower and change out of his suit into something more comfortable. Washing off the smell of Mason that never did leave his office entirely. He had called his cleaning company before leaving to arrange another day for them to come. He can still smell him on his clothes, which means Will will be able to smell him.

Tonight will be the first time he will invite Will to dine at his table with him, having realized that Will never ate at the dining table and sat at the counter for all his meals, eating with his pup. And while snacks and possibly lunch can be consumed in this manner, dinner certainly can not.

He puts on a pair of grey slacks and red cashmere sweater, soft brown loafers worn as house shoes and heads downstairs to start the evening meal. Tonight will be Osso Buco with Citrus Gremolata, the beef being the thigh meat of Christopher Duff, a middle aged security guard who attempted to inform Hannibal he had parked in the wrong bay of an artisan cheese shop, angrily flapping his security badge in Hannibal's face until he was informed he was wrong by the owner of the store, then stomping away without an apology. Mr Duff worked out, his thigh meat was rich, with a thin line of fat surrounding it.

Adam is in his usual spot in the kitchen, sitting at the counter, crayons and coloring book in front of him. His hair a curly mess on his head. Will is opposite him, leaning on the island counter, helping him color in a picture of a cat, an apple in his other hand, a bite taken from it.

"You want to make the cat blue Addy?" Will asks his pup, his bite of apple between his cheek and his teeth, making it rounded.

"A blue cat?" Hannibal asks as he walks to a cupboard and retrieves a glass.

Will straightens and quietly moves around the island as Hannibal fills his glass with water, putting more space between them. He chews his apple chunk and swallows, eyes rising to Hannibal's collar.

"Nothing wrong with a blue cat, Hannibal." He says quietly.

Hannibal drains half the glass of water and places it down on the side. "No, there isn't. Art is creative expression after all."

Will nods gently, moves to stand beside his pup and reaches over to run his hand through Adam's curls. The pup sighs and leans into his mother's hand. Will smiles at the boy and continues his petting. His fingers pulling the curls out flatter, then letting them ping back. Every so often he catches a small knot and Will works his fingers through it, untangling the soft curls until they're free. Adam accepts the affection, continuing to color his cat blue.

Hannibal watches this from his place behind the counter, the wood and steel structure a barrier between them. He doesn't notice the soft smile he makes, or the way his shoulders relax. The tug behind his ribs, deep under his lungs, gives a pull. A gentle one, quiet in its insistence, daring him to reach out too, run his own fingers through the pups hair, enjoy the soft feeling of the curls through his fingers. He wonders what Will's hair would feel like under his fingertips.

The thought pulls him from his observation and he clears his throat, straightening his back. Will startles a little at the sound and movement. His hand stilling in Adam's hair.

"I would like for you to join me for dinner tonight Will."

"Dinner?" Will asks in that gruff, stubborn way of his.

"Yes, while I am aware you eat all of your meals either in your room or here at the counter, I would prefer you dine at the dining table."

"I don't mind eating here." Will frowns.

"I do." Hannibal replies sternly. "Evening meals are to be eaten at the table. With silverware, and a napkin." Hannibal motions toward the piece of paper towel Will had put beside Adam's lunch plate, still on the counter, bread crusts left uneaten.

"I.." Will starts, then takes a deep breath. He lets it out through his nose, controlled. "Of course. I'll have dinner with you Hannibal."

Hannibal smiles. "Excellent. I'm making Osso Buco with Citrus Gremolata, an Italian dish, it's quite rich."

Will frowns again, his brow creasing in a small furrow. "I'll cook for Adam first, unless you want him to join us?" His eyes linger on the coloring book on the counter.

“Just your company please.” Hannibal says, his tone final.

Will nods, his shoulders curling in a little. “Theres some left over Mac and cheese, I can heat that up for him. Are we in your way?”

Hannibal takes in the way Will’s body has slightly shifted, his confidence failing. He seems to be physically shrinking by the second, his hands curled into tight fists by his sides.

“You’re not in the way Will.”

“Okay.” Will sighs and moves to the fridge to reheat the left overs for Adam’s dinner.

_____

While Hannibal cooks, Will spends the early evening in the bedroom with Adam. Hannibal can hear the occasional squeal and then Will’s throaty laughter over the music playing in the kitchen. Hannibal could turn the volume of Chopin’s 24 Preludes but he finds the sounds of other life in his home a little comforting.

He contemplates the changes with having Will and Adam in his house. It’s been nearly 4 months since he found them in the mechanics basement. Hiding them away in his own basement room, locking them in. Until he found out at Will’s pregnancy then moved them up to the guest bedroom on the second floor, still locking them in. And now? Now they both roam free. Not free exactly, Will knows not to leave the house, or go into the garden. And he hasn’t. While Hannibal doesn’t have cameras inside his home, he does have security camera’s on the exterior of the house, one pointed towards the street and another pointed out toward the back garden.

Hannibal, a predator in his own right, has no fear of being broken into. Anyone fool enough to break into Hannibal's home will end up on his plate. The camera's are merely to fit in with his neighbors. Much like locking his front door every day when he leaves. A carefully constructed facade to blend in with everyone else.

No one would guess that the mild mannered gentleman doctor is actually the Chesapeake Ripper, a murderer, a monster. Only Will knows to some extent what Hannibal is capable of. He knows he's quite comfortable with killing someone, taking his time. Will is well aware of Hannibal's late night activities. He doesn't however know that Hannibal it the Ripper.

While Hannibal does have a television in the den on the second floor, he's unaware if Will has ever entered the room, turned it on, watched a news article. And Will's limited reading ability would stop him from using Hannibal's tablet. No calls have ever been made from his house phone without his knowledge, Hannibal has itemized billing.

While Hannibal chops the carrots, celery, and onion, he decides tonight will be an opportunity to tell Will about the Ripper. He doesn't want to really intimidate Will, but Will's confidence is growing, he's becoming relaxed in Hannibal's presence. And while he's glad Will is finding his feet, he needs to be reminded what Hannibal is, what he is truly capable of.

Never one to deny himself the pleasure of poking the beast, a hedonist through and through.

———————-

Hannibal climbs the stairs to the second floor and gently taps on Will's door. He doesn't want for the omega to open it, he just gently tells him that dinner is ready and returns to the kitchen to plate up.

As he enters the dining room Will is already sitting at the table. He's freshly showered, his thick dark curls a little damp still. He's wearing an undershirt and sweat pants as this is all Hannibal had provided him with still. Hannibal makes a mental note to expand Will's

wardrobe as he places the artfully prepared dish in front of Will then takes his own place at the head of the table, Will to his right. It's more intimate than sitting across from each other and Hannibal enjoys the way Will shifts in his seat to give himself a few millimeters more distance.

"I've chosen a lovely Pinot Grigio to drink tonight, it pairs well with the meal. Would you like a glass Will?"

Will looks up as his name is said and narrows his eyes at the bottle. He opens his mouth to speak then closes it again.

Hannibal seeing Will's doubt offers "You may have one glass of wine when pregnant Will, a small one at least."

Will shakes his head "No, its not… that."

Hannibal tilts his head waiting for Will to continue. The silences last 30 seconds before Will says "Did you open it tonight?"

"Ah" Hannibal says "I take great pride in the food I create and select only the finest wines to pair with each meal. I didn't poison this wine, or this meal, and I never will."

He watches Will slacken slightly, his shoulders less jammed up near his ears. "A small glass please."

Hannibal stands and pours them both a glass, less for Will, a little more for himself. Hannibal can feel his own excitement. He wants to drive the conversation to the topic of the Ripper immediately, wants to watch Will as he understands who is on his plate, that Hannibal isn't just capable of killing, he is an artist, and a cannibal.

"You've eaten my food before Will, why are you now doubting me?" Hannibal asks as he takes his seat again, picking up his knife and fork.

Will waits for Hannibal to take his first bite before he picks up his own cutlery and begins to cut into his meat.

“I’ve eaten your food. We.. Adam and I… we’ve never drank anything you’ve given us.”

Hannibal pauses with his next forkful hovering above his plate. He lowers it slowly. Clever boy.

Hannibal chuckles. “It’s a shame you wasted all that good coffee.”

Will lets out a shaky breath, he had expected Hannibal to be angry. “Sorry” He whispers.

“Don’t be. Tell me, did you make yourself sick after I watched you drink your protein smoothie?”

“I… yes.” Will says. His scent is turning sour, just slightly. “I didn’t know you wouldn’t do anything to it.”

“You and Adam have both eaten my food Will. Unless you were throwing that away too?”

“Adam has never eaten any of it. The raisins, fruit, the protein bars you gave us before..” He pauses “before you let me in the kitchen.”

“The snacks you had hidden away.” Hannibal deduces.

Will nods gently, the movement causing his now dry fluffy fringe to fall across his brow, into his eyes.

Hannibal continues eating, delicate, polite bites of his Osso Buco. With this revelation it makes sense that Will hadn’t been gaining as much weight as he expected by now. And why the omega had been insistent that he make himself and Adam every meal. To protect himself

and his pup from being harmed. Hannibal smirks as he realizes how well Will had manipulated him, with just an offer of taking on a responsibility Hannibal was quite happy to do himself. A shy glance, a small smile and Hannibal had fallen for it. Clever, clever boy.

“Who poisoned your food Will?” Hannibal asks conversationally.

Will sputters on his wine a little, puts the glass down and wipes his chin with the back of his hand. Hannibal ignores the gesture in favor of letting Will feel relaxed enough to talk.

“Francis would drug the water sometimes.” He sighs. “Make me compliant, make me too weak to fight back.”

Hannibal nods and continues eating. “Abhorrent.” He states.

Will raises his head and looks at Hannibal’s hands as they bring his next forkful to his mouth. They pause at his collar, then move up to his face, free to trace his eyes over Hannibal’s nose, mouth. When they finally lower to his own plate, Will chuckles.

Hannibal looks up at the sound. Will’s laugh is deep and gruff, the sound rusty and pleasant. Like autumn leaves rushing across a dry forest floor. He smiles at it.

Will is grinning now, and laughing harder, the lines in the corner of his eyes deepening.

“Something funny Will?” Hannibal asks, his own smile broadening.

Will takes a breath, stilling the lovely sound of his laughter. “You drug people all the time Hannibal, you drug them, kill them, cut them up and eat them. Yet..” He shakes his head in disbelief. “You think drugging an omega to be rape them is abhorrent. A serial killer cannibal, with your morals. Your need for politeness, manners. You demand cleanliness, curtesy, strict bedtimes, you wake up at the same time every damned day regardless of how late your night time activities bring you home. You dress in these stupid suits, polished shoes, neatly styled hair. You see yourself as someone better, a God among pigs. Looking down

from your ivory tower as we all crawl in the mud beneath you. And yet, yet you're no better than any other killer out there, you take lives like plucking petals off a daisy, except its not 'will he won't he' its 'he will he will he will'"" Will mines the act of holding a delicate flower in his hand, tugging off the small petals one by one. "But underneath it all you're just a man, damaged by a past you couldn't control. So now you control everything around you instead, you control how people see you, you control how people think about you." Will takes a deep breath, his tirade finished it seems. He slumps in his chair, he closes his eyes, clenches his fists on his lap.

Hannibal sits back further in his chair, places his knife and fork down beside his plate. He takes in Will's posture. There is apprehension there, but no fear. He looks like a man who knows he will be punished for his outburst and willing to accept it, in whatever form it takes.

"Please go to your room." Hannibal snarls.

submit

Chapter Notes

OH WHATS THIS? another chapter merely hours after the last one? Yes. YES IT IS.
The last one was rough af so I thought id do another to make up for it.
Please dont leab.

TW on this its graphic. violence wise.

Hannibal, a creature of perfect control, lets his rage rise. He feels it seep into every cell in his body, every pore weeping with unfiltered fury. His muscles vibrate with the pure, unadulterated, adrenaline of anger. He imagines steam rising from his skin like an over run race horse. His breath is fire.

He stalks his target loudly, not caring if the ignorant Alpha ahead of him on the street can hear him or not. Better for it, he thinks, then he'll fight back. The man in front of him does indeed hear him but it's too late when he turns to confront him. Hannibal grabs him by the collar and throws him against the nearest wall. The thud of his head hitting the brick spurs Hannibal on and he steps forward to take him by the neck but not before the other alpha lands a punch to Hannibal chin. The blow doesn't stop him, he reaches for the man's neck, bringing his face in close and latches his teeth into the man's jaw, tearing a chunk of his cheek off with his fangs and swallowing it without chewing.

The man screams, brings his hand up to the tear and stares at Hannibal in horror. Hannibal tilts his head and refocuses. While the man's mouth is open, crying out for help, Hannibal pushes four fingers into the cavity and violently drags down, unhinging the man's jaw, leaving it obscenely wide open and dangling. Blood beings to fall onto the man's shirt, the floor. He gasps in shock as Hannibal reaches into the bloody chasm and yanks on the man's tongue, ripping it forward and out. The muscle stretches and flops about past his lips, useless.

It's then Hannibal shifts and drags the man to the alley between the buildings and throws him to the floor. The man is now whimpering, pathetic sounds escaping the mess of his mouth. Hannibal stands over him silently. He turns the man over and straddles him, turning his face to him and digs his thumbs into his eye sockets, pushing past the soft eyelids, the pulpy mass of his eyes, the fragile sockets behind them until he reaches the spongy flesh behind it all. He pushes and pushes until the man falls silent. Hannibal brings one of his messy thumbs to his

mouth a suckles it like a child until the digit is clean.

From his pocket he produces a scalpel and sets to work removing the dead mans face entirely. It's bloody and messy. The cuffs and sleeves of his suit jacket, knees of his expansive slacks are saturated in fluids but Hannibal doesn't care. With the face removed, Hannibal stands, drops the flimsy mask onto the body then lifts it up and over his shoulder and leaves the alley.

When he returns home the anger hasn't abated. It still thrums beneath his skin, burning in his veins. The kill wasn't enough. It hasn't calmed the anger caused by Will's words, his judgment. In just a few sentences Will had broken Hannibal down, dug under his skin and rendered him base, nothing more than a set of influences. Cause and affect.

Taking Will into his home was his first mistake, he should have killed Adam when he saw him and left Will to starve in the mechanics basement. So what Adam was just a pup, so what Will was abused, so what. So what. Hannibal knows the thoughts are cold and empty, he wouldn't have been able to do it. Kill a pup. Kill Adam. The thought shifts through the strings of Hannibal's heart and he knows he could never. Even to save his own life.

He drops his keys into the bowl beside the front door then changes his mind when he sees they are bloody too. He growls and makes his way through the kitchen to the basement door, uses his knuckle to punch in the code and descends in darkness. He strips right there on the concrete floor, then walks to the room Will and Adam once occupied. He raises his nose, sniffs and grimaces, the smell of them lingers, its thick with the pheromones of pregnant omega, the sweetness of a child and underneath it all the pure smell of Will. Sea salt, a gentle breeze through a pine forest, fresh cookies, and home. Hannibal's gut clenches at the realization that Will smells like home. He can't. Hannibal won't let him.

He goes to the ensuite and turns on the shower. He doesn't realize he's growling until the echo of the bathroom returns the noise to him ten fold, mocking him. He steps under the water and lets it wash the blood from his skin. It doesn't ease the anger. The frustration. The confusion. He takes a deep breath and cleans himself using the soap on the shelf. Then growls louder realizing he now smells of Will too and punches the tiles beside the shower taps. It splits his knuckle but he doesn't feel it.

The next moments are a blur and he finds himself, naked, on the second floor of his house outside Will and Adams bedroom door. He's still wet, dripping on the expensive runner. His breath is heaving in his lungs as the door opens to Will looking distressed. His eyes wide, his mouth open. Hannibal opens his mouth to speak but finds he can't. Words won't form. There

Will is, topless in loose pajama pants hanging low on his hips. His hairless chest working to suck in air. Rising and falling rapidly. Hannibal takes in the sight, Will's scared skin, the burn marks, the bumps of wide cuts healed without stitches. And then lower down, the faint silver lines of stretch marks. Hannibal lowers his stance as if to pounce but Will doesn't flinch away. Instead he stands straighter, raises his chin and stares Hannibal defiantly in the eyes.

Silently Hannibal takes a step back pressing himself against the wall, his fists clenched, knuckles blanching. The ripped skin of the knuckles of his right hand reopening the cut from punching the tiles. Will, desperately aware of Hannibal's nudity, his muscular hairy chest heaving, his mouth open panting, strains to keep his eyes up and not rake them over Hannibal's terrifying body.

Will takes a step forward not breaking eye contact. Hannibal can see he knows in this moment who has the control. One wrong move and he's dead, Hannibal has succumbed to his Alpha nature, the beast inside the man is crawling along the surface of his skin, the doctor, the gentleman, the haunted man who looks at his son with so much compassion, isn't here anymore. Will gently closes the door behind him, his nest and pup now safe inside. Adam will sleep till the morning secure in the piles of blankets and pillows Hannibal provided.

Hannibal moves forward barely an inch towards Will's bedroom door and Will lets out a throaty growl. Not here, not in there, it says. He starts to back down the corridor to Hannibal's bedroom, his bare feet moving as quietly as he can. They reach Hannibal's room and
Will backs through the open doorway and Hannibal follows, one stalking movement at a time.

Will backs into the bedroom as slowly as he can until the backs of his knees hit the bed and he sits down on it. Hannibal watches him lower himself carefully then rushes forward stopping within an inch of Will's face, bending forward until they're nose to nose, his hot breath ghosting over Will's face as he continues glaring at Hannibal. Eye to eye, nose to nose, Hannibal begins to fold himself until his knees touch the floor, bringing his hands up either side of Will's thighs on the bed. What feels like forever and merely seconds at the same time Hannibal blinks slowly and brings his head down onto Will's lap, turning his head so his right cheek is flush with Will's left thigh and lets out a gentle sigh.

He hears Will let out a small gasp. He knows who he is. He's no crazed beast, he's not just a man. He's the Chesapeake Ripper. He is elite, he is highly respected, a psychiatrist, a nobleman, but under it all he is an Alpha. And he's resting his cheek on the skinny thighs of

Will Graham in complete submission. Because this, here, right now, has calmed his anger. The scent of Will, the warmth of him.

His growling has evolved into purrs and he rubs his cheek on the soft material on Will's pajama pants, spreading his scent and gathering Will's in return.

Will gasps softly as Hannibal raises his hands and gently grips Will's hips to balance himself, then moves gradually ups Will's lap, torso, chest, then neck, scenting him, inhaling deeply and letting out gently chuffs and purrs.

Will keeps his hands slightly raised, they hover over Hannibal shoulders ready to push him away should Hannibal suddenly lunge.

A tears escapes Will's eye, trailing gently down Will's skin to land softly on Hannibal cheek as he turns to scent Will's neck. Hannibal pulls back and lets the tear fall down his own cheek, crying Will's tear back at him, his eyes searching. Hannibal pins him with his beautiful maroon eyes, ringed faintly in Alpha red. The look is pleading, don't reject me, they say. You see the beast and you see the man. Submit.

Will blinks then nods, only once. A small concession but enough for Hannibal to right himself again, gathers Will under the arms and man handles him further up the bed, laying him back so his head is resting on the pillow. Hannibal lays down beside him, curls himself to Will's side, his head resting on Will's chest, arm over his waist, thigh over Will's own. Will brings his hand to Hannibal's head and tentatively begins to stroke his hair, softly pulling the strands, raking his nails feather light over his scalp. Hannibal tightens his hold over Will's middle and sighs.

Hannibal can feel the slight tension in Will's body as he holds him close. It's clear Will has never been scented before. Or at least not like this. His brilliant, clever Will. Having spend most of his adult life brutalized by Alphas. Taught to fear, his body used. He will surely know now that Hannibal would never use him like that. As far from a man as Hannibal was tonight, his secondary gender holding the reigns, he still didn't force Will, didn't and won't rape him. He isn't like the other alphas.

Hannibal closed his eyes and let out a deep sigh. Content to spend the night like this.

———————-

At some point in the night Will had left Hannibal's side. When Hannibal wakes with the cold light of morning peaking in through a gap in his drapes, the bed beside him is empty, the sheets cool to the touch. Hannibal rises and puts on his robe. He walks quietly down the hall to Will and Adam's room and gently opens the door.

Will and Adam are wrapped around each other, the pup snuggled under Will's arm, blankets piled over them. Hannibal closes the door with a silent snick and turns to go downstairs.

In the kitchen the dinner plates and cooking utensils are all clean. The pots and pans used to cook are clean and dry, hanging in their respective places. Hannibal enters the dining room to find the table is clean, the chairs pushed in.

Will had cleaned up once Hannibal had left. Not knowing of his fate, Will had still taken the time to set Hannibal's home how he likes it. Clean, clear, orderly. A pang of guilt hits Hannibal's stomach, the feeling somewhat unknown. Hannibal closes his eyes to fully understand it, its unsettling and is closely followed by embarrassment. He frowns. Embarrassed. Is he?

Hannibal isn't one to deny his alpha status, but last night he really felt as though he wasn't fully in control. He couldn't help the anger that rushed through his body, nor the urge to scent Will, push his face into the soft skin of the omegas body and submit to him. Because that's what he did. He handed his power to the man currently slumbering in the guest room, no, in Will's room. And Will took that power graciously. Took it and handed it back to him.

Hannibal had never submitted to anyone. He'd had lovers, omegas, betas, even an alpha or two. But he was always the one in control. Never the one who submits, the one who gives themselves fully to the other.

Hannibal turned and went back to the kitchen to start making coffee and breakfast. As he cracked an egg over the hot pan he heard Will clear his throat behind him.

He looked over his shoulder briefly. Will stood in the kitchen doorway, arms hanging limply by his sides, he was wearing a clean t-shirt and the soft pajama pants from last night. He hadn't showered. He hadn't removed Hannibal's scent from his skin.

The thought sent a thrill up Hannibal's spine and he had to turn back to the pan to hide the flush on his cheeks.

"Good morning Will, would you like breakfast?"

Will cleared his throat again. "Yes please."

He heard Will pull out the stool and sit at the counter.

"Will Adam be joining us?" Hannibal asked as he began plating the food. Eggs, bacon, toast, strawberries and blueberries. Simple but filling.

"No, he's still asleep. Had a rough night."

Hannibal turned and placed the plates down on the counter. One in front of Will and one opposite. He poured them both coffee, black for Will, cream and one sugar for himself. He took the second stool on the opposite side of the island. The added barrier welcome in the tense air of the kitchen.

"Is he unwell again?" Hannibal asked, cutting into his egg.

Will shook his head "No, no he woke up and I wasn't with him, he panicked I think, cried out for me."

Hannibal looked up then, meeting Will's eyes. They were truly a beautiful color, a snowstorm over a frozen sea, the steel remains of a shipwreck deep in the ocean depths, and the warm ring of omega gold, wider now as his pregnancy progressed.

Will held his gaze for a moment longer than Hannibal thought he would. The unspoken words '*Its the only reason I left*' hanging in the air between them.

Hannibal smiled and went back to eating his breakfast.

be careful

Chapter Notes

> *rifles through bag full of scraps of paper* It's in here somewhere... AHA! *Pulls out ripped piece of paper with tea ring on it*
> For you! I love you!

Hannibal and Will haven't shared a bed since Hannibal had come home in a haze. Hannibal had managed to gently start introducing touch to Will but the omega still shied away most of the time. Moving just in time to avoid Hannibal's hand. And Hannibal never pushed.

Will allowed the odd elbow bump while they stood side by side preparing dinner. A stroke of fingers as Hannibal handed Will a coffee or glass of water.

Other than that? nothing.

And Hannibal was fine with that. The situation he found himself in was completely new. Will had had more experience navigating life with someone else, he seemed to fall into a gentle domesticity quietly and easily. But Hannibal had never shared his home with someone before. And now Will and Adam were more than room mates. There was a closeness that Hannibal could feel brewing in his chest, he wanted Will's attention, he wanted his company. Hannibal silently congratulated the Omega in his manipulations, cunning boy.

While Will had been sharing his space, he had implanted himself into Hannibal's life so easily. One locked room to another locked room, to the open door, to conversation, to the dinner table, to quiet contemplation by the fire in the study. And that's where Hannibal and Will were now. Adam upstairs asleep in bed.

Hannibal with a book in one hand and a glass of wine in the other. Will curled up on the chair opposite, a large photo book of Italy open on his lap, a mug of chamomile tea in his hand.

Hannibal listened as Will turned the pages slowly, marveling at the ancient Roman structures in beautiful glossy detail.

“Hannibal?” Will muttered.

Glancing up at Will he saw that the man was frowning at the page. “Will?”

“Would you… “He trailed off as though nervous to ask. He kept his head down, his fringe falling across his forehead

“Ask your question Will.” Hannibal put down his book and turned slightly in his chair.

“I was just wondering, if Adam and I… could go into the garden sometime?” Will took a deep breath and shakily let it out.

Hannibal contemplated the question. While he could trust Will in the house, the omega well aware of Hannibal’s wrath, the temptation to leave has been behind closed doors. Would he try and escape once he’s outside, roaming the garden. A taste of freedom. A desire for more. While Will and Adam looked quite well now, he could still go to authorities, tell them about being kidnapped, locked in Hannibal’s home. He could tell them about Hannibal killing, feeding them human flesh. Will’s scars would be more than enough to convince any kind of authoritative figure to at least look into his claims.

But there was more to it than that Hannibal realized. He didn’t want Will to leave. The thought gave him pause. He had spent his entire life alone. The king of his own castle. But now the thought of returning home to that castle without Will and Adam in it felt like returning home to a dusty pile of stony ruins. He didn’t want that.

Will’s shoulders curled in as he shrank further into his chair. His confidence waining.

“I do not think that’s a good idea Will.” Hannibal stated, he resumed scanning his book, not actually reading it, waiting for Will’s response.

Will's body seemed to puff up, then shrink again as he took in Hannibal's words. Hannibal watched him wrestle with the desire to respond in a way that wouldn't be taken as defiance. Finally he opened his mouth.

"But I've never tried to leave. I won't try to leave." He whispered gruffly. The rasp in his voice conveying his frustration at not being granted this extra bit of freedom.

"I am aware." Hannibal answered, placing his book down again. "Why is that?"

Will twitched in his seat and raised his face to look at Hannibal's collar. "What?"

Hannibal laced his fingers together and placed them on his knee. Full therapist mode. "You're no longer in the basement, and are not locked in your room. You walk about this house freely yet have never tried to escape. I asked you why."

"I…" Will stuttered. "It's not safe." His brow deepening into a frown.

Hannibal tilted his head "You are quite safe here Will, within reason." He smirked.

Will huffed out a breath and gave a slight roll of his eyes. Will's temperament was delightful, coarse and rough around the edges. Hannibal enjoyed this side of Will. He liked pulling at Will's strings, forcing the omega to fight against his forced passivity. So many years being beaten down to appear weak, unable to snap back, to talk how he pleased.

"I meant it's not safe out there."

"Is my home the lesser of two evils Will?"

Will sighed and let his gaze drift to the open fire. The amber light of the flames highlighting Will's lips, his brow, the scars running the length of his forehead and jaw. He closed his eyes letting Hannibal stare without restraint.

"I know what you are. I know what you do. I don't know what's out there, what I would be exposing Adam too. I've spent so long in the dark. I… I have no idea what the world is like now."

Hannibal stayed silent for a moment then stood. Will's eyes snapped open and he looked up at Hannibal wide eyed, his breath quickening. Hannibal walked to the open study door.

"Come Will." He said and left the room. Hannibal could hear the fabric of Will's sweat pants as he scrabbles to obey, the gentle padding of his bare feet on the hardwood floor behind him as he followed Hannibal silently up the second floor.

As Hannibal walked to his own bedroom door Will's footsteps faltered then sped up as Hannibal passes his own bedroom to the room at the end of the hall. He opened the door and entered.

Will stopped in the hall and peered into the darkened room.

"Come in Will."

Hannibal turned on a lamp and gestured to the centre of the room.

"What is this room?" Will asked nervously.

"I call this room 'The Den', I don't use it very often as I prefer to sit in the study. Come, sit." Hannibal motions to a comfy looking couch facing an ornate mahogany side board. He sits at one end and waits for Will to sit at the other. Will takes his time, no doubt taking in all the decor of the room.

It's painted dark blue, with green accents. The couch is well stuffed, the pattern baroque style. There are paintings on the walls of sailing ships from the 1800's, Spanish schooners, The Mary Celeste.

Will finally takes a seat at the far end of the couch, as far from Hannibal as he can and jumps when Hannibal pushes a button on the remote in his hand, causing the wall above the cabinet to swing open revealing a large flat screen television.

"Huh" Will chuckles, "You have a tv?"

"There are wonderful recordings of Opera available from time to time. Performances I haven't been able to attend."

Will chuckles again "Not a fan of daytime TV then?"

Hannibal frowns and turns the television on, the screen brightening for a moment then settling on a selection screen. Hannibal scrolls down to a 24 hour news channel, CBS Baltimore. It takes a few seconds to connect to the channel then two presenters appear on the screen, sitting behind a large desk. Hannibal turns the volume up to an acceptable level.

He turns his head to watch Will as he takes in the images on the screen. The story being covered is the latest series of killings dubbed The Omega Killer, the same case Hannibal is helping Jack Crawford with. He doesn't pay any attention to what is being said.

Will's eyes are wide as the images move across the screen, he frowns as the presenters describe the killings in edited details.

"Is this happening now?" He asked.

"This news channel is live, yes."

“No, I mean they’ve found another one.” Will pointed to the television. “They said there have been others. Is this a new one?”

Hannibal redirects his attention to the screen to see a flustered looking correspondent gripping a large microphone, the wind making their shoulder length hair whip across their face. Behind them are long strips of police tape, secured around a crime scene, officers standing guard. White sheeting as been hung from temporary metal frames blocking off the scene.

They sit and listen as the presenter and correspondent talk about the scene, when it was found, by who, what it looked like.

“I would say based on what is being described then yes, this is another victim.” Hannibal observes, his distaste evident.

Will shudders, it shakes the frame of the couch slightly and Hannibal looks to Will again, who is now frowning hard, biting his bottom lip. Hannibal can’t decipher his expression.

“You ask me why I haven’t tried to leave.” Will says shaking his head, he looks away from the screen, eyes unfocused.

“I have been helping the FBI with this very case.” Hannibal said, turning to look at the screen once more.

In his peripheral vision he can see Will’s head snap up, he looks at Hannibal with his jaw slightly open.

“You… you’re helping the FBI?” His voice is a quiet rasp.

Hannibal turns to look at Will once more and Will's eyes drop to Hannibal's tie. "I find it best to keep one's enemies close."

Will scoffs and returns his attention to the news article. "You just like flaunting yourself about, strutting up and down the halls of the FBI, hiding all your sins in plain sight. I bet you even make cannibal puns and no one gets them."

Hannibal wants to feel indignation. Yet all he can feel is a fond amusement.

"I do not strutt." Hannibal sniffs.

He can see the corner of Will's mouth curl up slightly. It's there for a moment then gone. Hannibal can feel a small jump in the bottom of his stomach knowing he caused that curl. And not because Will felt he had to, give a smile to pacify the alpha but genuine amusement. Will has smiled slightly before, but he hides them, ducking his head, covering them with the rim of a mug. But this one was right there on his face, openly shown, if only for a moment.

Hannibal silently makes a vow to himself to cause more of those real curls in the corners of Will's lips.

Hannibal's phone starts ringing in his pocket. Will doesn't react, just watches the news with interest. Hannibal takes his phone out of his pocket and see's Jack Crawfords name flash on his screen. He picks up the remote and selects the subtitles and mutes the sound.

"What?" Will says.

"It will help you darling." Hannibal says and presses the green answer button on his phone.

Will huffs and turns back to the television, his eyes squinting as he tries to follow the words on the screen.

“Jack.” Hannibal says, then abruptly pulls the phone further away from his ear, the sounds of commotion in the background overwhelming for a second.

“Doctor Lecter, there’s been another one.” Jack’s voice it stained.

“Yes, I’m watching the news report now.”

“You have a television?” Jack asks, his surprise apparent, even through the phone.

Will lets out a short bark of laughter, then covers his mouth, ducking his head and looking at Hannibal from the corner of his eye.

Hannibal lets out a sigh “Yes Jack.”

“Sorry Doctor, do you have company? We could really use you right now at the crime scene.”

Hannibal stills. Yes he does have company. But not the type to explain to the Agent.

“I have a friend here, but he won’t mind me assisting you. Would you text me the location? I can join you as soon as possible.”

Jack thanks him and hangs up. Hannibal moves to stand and sees Will looking at him, his eyes narrowed.

“Friend.” Will says, his voice quiet.

“Yes Will.”

“I’ve.. I haven’t had a friend before. I’m not sure if this is friendship Hannibal.”

Hannibal relaxes back onto the couch, his phone beeps in his pocket. He doesn't look at it.

"Tell me Will, do you think about me when I'm not here."

Will looks lost for a moment. His eyes roving over the contents of the room. He opens his mouth to speak, then closes it again. His eyes finally settle on the cabinet doors underneath the television.

"I think about a lot of things when you're not here." He says.

Hannibal tilts his head, he knows Will has more to say. He fidgets with his sleeves, picking at the cuffs. He shrinks a little in his seat, folding in, he bends his legs and pulls his knees to his chest, bare feet resting on the cushion of the seat.

"I think about you when you're not here." Will whispers.

Hannibal allows a moment to let that statement settle over him. Will's tone of voice betrayed nothing of the manner of which Will thinks about him. No undertones of fear or disgust. But also no excitement or happiness.

"How does that make you feel?" Hannibal asks.

Will doesn't answer, instead he slowly unfurls from the couch. Letting his feet fall to the floor, his stomach tensing and Will raises to a stand. It's a graceful motion, feline like, and Hannibal watches as Will turns to him, stepping into Hannibal's space. Close enough to lean down and touch.

Hannibal's breath catches as Will does just that, he gently bends at the waist, his hand outstretched. But instead of touching Hannibal's hand he moves past it and picks up the

television remote, spins on his heal and turns the volume back up on the TV. He then steps back to his end of the couch and sits down, ignoring Hannibal completely.

Hannibal lets out a chuckle and stands. Well played. He smooths down his waistcoat and jacket.

“I don’t know what time I’ll be back.” He states and begins to leave the room. He doesn’t wait for Will’s reply, knowing the omega will either ignore him or grunt in that rough fashion of his.

He makes it just through the door when Will calls his name. He turns, Will is still looking at the television, the story of the Omega Killer flashing boldly on the screen.

“Yes Will?”

“Be… be careful.” Will says.

That confusing tug up behind his ribs gives another twang, causing his breath to silently stutter.

“Of course.” He replies and walks down the hall, to Jack Crawford, to the Omega Killer. Away from Will.

Brunette

Chapter Notes

Sorry its been a while. This past month has been crazy.
Anyway, I present you with a new chapter.
Should I add the slow burn tag? is this a slow burn? I know it says 25 chapters but I feel like its gonna be more.
If you haven't already, you need to read The Proditor by Achleys and Sanctified by ms_masago. Because they are beautiful.

The body hanging from the tree was like the others. As Hannibal stepped forward to observe the forensic team take photos of the scene, he was truck by the simplistic beauty of the wrapped corpse, swaying slightly in the night air. If it wasn't for the dried blood seeping through the white bandages, the body would be reminiscent of a butterfly chrysalis, hiding the fragile body of the caterpillar inside.

The rope looped around the feet of the body, tried up high in the branches, was red, the contrast with the lush green of the tree and the paleness of the shroud, was striking. A flash from the camera brought Hannibal out of his reverie and he turned to Jack standing beside him in the wet grass.

"Have you looked into the origin of the rope? Is it unique?"

"It's 8 mm, polyester. Sold in most hardware stores across the county." A woman called out as she rose from the bottom of the tree, her dark hair swept elegantly into a ponytail at the base of her neck. She wore practical, simple clothing under an official FBI jacket.

She stepped towards Hannibal with a confidence only an alpha would posses.

"We already tested it. Hi, I'm Bev." She didn't raise her hand to shake as it was clad in a sterile blue glove.

“This is Hannibal Lecter” Jack introduced. “Dr Lecter, Beverly is one of the best on our forensic team. We’ve only just got her back.”

Beverly put her hand on her hip and rolled her eyes. “Yeah got forbid my wife have a baby and I get paternity leave, right?” She winked at Hannibal. He decided he liked her.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you.” He said.

She nodded in ascent then looked back at the body. “Theres something different about this one Jack. I dunno what it is, just got a feeling.”

Jack opened his mouth to speak when an excited shriek caused them all to turn to the direction of the sound. A beta Hannibal had met previously in the lab appeared from behind the tree, practically bouncing up and down.

“I’ve got a print!” He said gleefully. “A god damned print!”

The next few moments were a blur of activity that Hannibal stepped back from. Agents rushed forwards, cameras flashed, blue gloves filled the space behind the tree. Jack barked orders. Hannibal watched the scene with a mild interest, he wondered if they were like this at his own crime scenes. Like little ants around a sugar cube, all desperate to take their own tiny grain back to their hill to inspect with other little ants.

Eventually the excitement died down, the body was removed from the tree and placed on a gurney and wheeled into the back of an ambulance. Jack stood watching this all from the sidelines like an old sentinel, making sure each worker did their job correctly, ready to reprimand anyone who stood out of line. Hannibal thought about the ants again.

Hannibal followed the FBI SUV and the ambulance back to Quantico to see the body while it was still fresh. He doubted how fresh it was, the blood on the wrappings looked dry, old.

He walked into the lab as they were cutting off the white bandages wrapped about the corpse, having been held up at security.

Price, the man who had found the print was sitting behind a completed looking computer looking dejected. Jack had his hand on the back of the beta's chair and was leaning over scrutinizing the screen in front of them both.

“I’m telling you Jack, it's not on the system.” Price said.

“Run it again.”

“You can run it a hundred times, if it's not there, it's not there.” Zeller called out from behind another computer desk. In contrast to Price’s desk, his was piled high with cardboard files and paperwork, old coffee cups and take out boxes.

Jack snarled over his shoulder. Price ducked under the Alpha looming over his chair and stood, shooting a look to Zeller that said ‘don't poke the beast,' Zeller just shrugged and pulled on a pair of blue gloves, making his way over to the autopsy table where Beverley had just finished peeling back layers of fabric.

Hannibal watched as the face of the dead omega was finally revealed. Not long dead, his eyes removed, the sockets still somewhat wet. His genitals have been cut off, once again in a crude violent manner, the jagged edges on the wound slightly shriveled.

“Jack?” Beverly called out. “You’re gonna want to see this.”

Jack straightened himself from Price’s chair and walked over to the table the forensic team where now gathered around, Hannibal standing with them.

Jack took in a deep breath “He’s changed his MO.”

Laying on the table was an omega, brunette, taller than the other victims, and while it was still early, he was clearly pregnant. The slight swell of his abdomen hidden behind layers of wrapping.

“I can check the files but I'm pretty sure the others weren’t pregnant.” Zeller said tightly. His face pinched, hiding his anger.

“Or brunette.” Hannibal chimed in. “This could be an act of desperation, maybe this Omega was in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

“Or he’s run out of blondes.” Beverly added.

The team and Hannibal stepped back to allow Jack to circle the table, take in the body from all sides before retreating a step back at the head of the table.

There was something fragile about a pregnant Omega, male or female. Hannibal understood this himself all too much. The primal urge to protect, to nurture. While this body no longer secreted the pheromones or had the scent of pregnancy filling the air of the lab, the sight of the body was just as powerful. Something vibrated in the air from the three alphas around the table, the image of their own omega loved one superimposing the one on the table.

Hannibal imaged Will laying there, pale in death, but just as beautiful. His skin almost translucent, the thin blue veins of his hands standing out under the harsh florescent lights of the lab. Hannibal could feel the pinch of a growl caught in his throat and swallowed it back down. Around him he could hear the low murmur of voices of Jack and the forensic team as they discussed the wounds inflicted on the body. As each wound was described they appeared on Will’s prone naked body before his very eyes.

Lacerations on the wrists, mutilation to the genitals, ligature marks on the neck. Each wound a brand on Will’s pallid flesh, shining bright in the room. Hannibal closed his eyes to the vision. When he opened them again, the team had stopped talking and were watching him intently. Jack was scowling, Price was squinting, Bev looked concerned and Zeller was looking everywhere but at Hannibal.

“Dr Lecter? Are you ok?” Jack asked.

Hannibal cleared his throat. “Yes, I’m quite well.” He stepped away from the table, allowing the others more room.

As the team worked on the body, taking tissue samples and photographing the wounds Jack came to stand by Hannibal as he stood by the wall of body storage draws.

“I didn’t take you as someone squeamish Dr Lecter, Alana said you were once a surgeon.” Jack said quietly, leaning into Hannibal’s space in a subtle attempted at secrecy.

“I was a trauma surgeon for many years. This, however isn’t surgery, this is brutality.” Hannibal fired back.

Jack nodded solemnly. “It can hard to witness this kind of cruelty when we also have an omega in our life.”

Hannibal turned to look at Jack, measuring the emotion in his eyes.

“What do you mean?” Hannibal asked.

“The scent of an omega has become stronger on you these past few months, sorry, I didn’t mean to pry.” Jack smiled.

“He is a patient of mine, I rarely treat Omegas, his case is a special one.”

Jack’s head bobbed in a slight nod “I see. Well, might want to consider some scent blockers for your office.” Jack smiled and clapped his hand on Hannibal’s shoulder in what would be considered a friendly gesture.

Hannibal wasn't so sure. Alpha posturing aside, Jacks observation was concerning.

Hannibal was actually wearing a scent blocker, using laundry detergent with scent neutralizer and had been for weeks now since Alana had mentioned smelling Will and had his car valeted recently requesting a neutralizing clean to the interior. He would have to ask Will to wear a scent blocker from now on, and oh how that conversation would go.

When he rejoined the others by the slab, Zeller had a clipboard in his hand and was reading off the details listed in front of him.

"Got an ID on the body. Victim number seven, Ben Knight, 28 years old, lives in Catonsville with his husband. This would have been their first child. Went missing eight days ago."

"This body is three, four days old, tops." Beverly injected.

"Was he taken from his home?" Jack asked.

"Doesn't say." Zeller frowned. "Husband said he wasn't at home like he expected him to be, but could have been taken at any point in the day. Said he was going to the supermarket, could have been taken from the car park, or followed home."

Beverly sighed and folded her arms.

"Was he purchased from the ORO?" Hannibal asked.

Zeller flips through the sheets of paper in the clipboard, biting his lip in concentration. He pauses to read the page before summarizing out loud. "He was registered but met someone before any financial compensation could go through the ORO, there's photos of their wedding, they look happy."

"Ok, so we have every victim at least registered with the ORO, some purchased through the centre, some married outside of it. Their appearance was almost identical until this one." Jack

shakes his head and starts to slowly pace up and down. “Maybe their similarity isn’t a visual one, they’re all happy, have or expecting pups.”

“Could be someone who works in antenatal or pediatrics? How many hospitals in Baltimore have good obstetrics clinics?” Price asks. All eyes turn to Hannibal, eyebrows raised.

Hannibal smiles. “While I know a fair number of Doctors in trauma surgery, I’m afraid my knowledge of Local Obstetricians is rather limited.”

Jack nods and Zeller frowns, his shoulders fall slightly.

“Perhaps Alana might be able to assist? She works closely with families and children.” Hannibal suggests.

“I’ll call her now.” Jack states and reaches out for Zeller’s clip board, who scrambles to hand it over, reaching over the length of the gurney.

“Thank you for your time and help Dr Lecter.” Jack says and then is gone, the lab doors swinging shut behind him.

Bev checks her watch. “Hope Jack’s not calling her now, it’s pretty late, or early.” She shrugs.

To help emphasize her point, Price gives a large yawn, covering his wide mouth with the back of his fist.

Hannibal moves to retrieve his coat from where he had placed it on an empty desk across from the lab currently housed by the forensic team. When he turns back to make his excuses and leave he comes face to face with Zeller, who, while not standing directly in front of him, is putting himself in Hannibal’s line of sight.

“Will you be needing me for longer?” Hannibal asks, his gaze turning to each member of the lab team before returning to Zeller.

“No, no, I just thought you know, you would know a good obstetrician.” Zeller gives a lopsided shrug and runs his gloved hand through his hair. He grimaces and takes the glove off with a snap.

“My obstetrics rounds during my student days were a rather long time ago, I’m afraid my memory isn’t that perfect.”

“Sorry, I just, I can smell you know…” Zeller mumbles.

“Ah.” Hannibal straightens. “A patient of mine is pregnant, apparently the scent blockers in my office aren’t very affective.”

Zeller lets out an embarrassed puff of a laugh. “Sorry.”

“No need.” Hannibal nods once and makes his way out of the lab and into the corridor beyond.

What he doesn’t see, though presumes is happening behind him as hushed murmurs fill the space he leaves, is the lab team discussing himself and his pregnant ‘patient’.

———————-

The house is dark when he enters it, although the sky outside is beginning to show the first gentle tint of dawn.

Hannibal slips off his shoes, places his key in the bowl by the door and takes off his coat, hanging it in the hall closet. As he steps into the kitchen, the fridge door slams shut with a violent clang, the bottles and glassware inside shaking. A shadow retreating to the safety of the hall.

Hannibal is across the room before he realizes he's moving, he wraps his forearm around the throat of the intruder, giving a tight squeeze. As he moves to take a step back and immobilize the intruder completely he's suddenly overcome with pain. Radiating from his groin, up through his pelvis and into his stomach, Hannibal's arm drops and he hunches over, gagging.

Will takes in a heaving breath and pushes himself away from Hannibal as he puts a hand on the worktop to steady himself. Hannibal hears the light switch flick on, the room suddenly saturated with light.

"What the fuck Hannibal?" Will wheezes, touching his throat tentatively. The air in the kitchen fills with the scent of Will's anger, and Hannibal's pain. Will scrunches his nose up.

Hannibal holds up his hand to acknowledge Will speaking, and gestures to himself, still bent over.

Will rolls his eyes "I'll get you some ice." He walks to the pantry, to the walk in freezer and Hannibal can hear him rummaging around, moving frozen items. When he returns he has a dish towel folded into a pouch with ice inside. "Come on, sit down."

Hannibal straightens himself slightly, gives a faint grimaces and limps over to the nearest bar stool at the kitchen island. Will hands him the pouch of ice and takes the stool beside him.

Hannibal gently places the ice pack to his groin, flinching at the sudden cold. He looks up as Will gives a small chuckle.

"Still not used to someone else in the house huh?" Will asks, his fingers tapping out an uneven rhythm on the worktop.

Hannibal shakes his head, still unsure if speaking will result in an embarrassing squeak.

“I learnt that move from my Daddy. He said it would come in handy if some uncouth Alpha were to attempt anything untoward.” Will sighs and looks down at the worktop, he traces an invisible pattern on the marble. “Shame he didn’t teach me any others. Things might be a bit different.” He looks up and Hannibal can see he’s lost him somewhere in the past, Will’s eyes look green with the black worktop reflected in them, slightly hazy with memory.

He comes back to himself with a little shake and looks at Hannibal still slightly bend over on the stool beside him.

“Sorry I twisted your balls.”

Hannibal grimaces at the language used. Balls indeed. He closes his eyes, when he opens them he can see Will smirking, he’s turned his head to face the window, watching Hannibal in the reflection. They make eye contact in the pale glass, neither looks away.

“I’m…” Hannibal clears his throat. “I’m sorry I tried to choke you.”

Will nods, sucking his lower lip into his mouth, he chews on it for a moment before releasing it. He hops off the stool, standing close to Hannibal who watches all of this in the window, the pink light of the morning causing the image to fade softly.

Will shuffles forward a little, his body warmth felt against Hannibal’s shoulder and thigh, like sitting beside a dying bonfire. If he were to turn to look up at Will they would be mere inches apart.

He feels Will’s body shift before he sees the reflection of Will move, Will leans forward, tilts his head down and places a barely there kiss to the top of Hannibal’s head. His scalp feels branded from the gentle brush of Will’s soft lips. He hasn’t been kissed like that since he was a small boy and had no idea how much he missed it. His mind suddenly filled with the feeling of silky hair against his own lips, the tender sound of a child’s giggle.

Hannibal watches Will's reflection turn to the leave the room.

"Will." He croaks.

Will turns back to him in the doorway. His mirror image tilts his head, much like a dog would with curiosity.

"You were eating when I disturbed you. Are you hungry?"

Reflection Will smiles shyly and shakes his head, his curls falling about his face. Then he's gone.

Hannibal lets out a deep sigh, moves to stand then sits again, needing another few moments with the ice pack. Balls indeed.

Johns Hopkins

Chapter Notes

Hello Gorgeous. Theres a little bit of a slur in this chapter towards people who are neuro divergent. The R slur. I'm sorry I had to use it, its needed for the story.

I love you all. Like properly love you. Will you marry me?

Adam does not like the feeling of grass on his bare toes. But as Hannibal has yet to buy either Will or Adam any shoes then its bare feet in the garden, or no garden. Adam does, however, like the feeling of Hannibal's pebble path leading to the end of the garden and small copse of apples trees.

Hannibal watches Will, watching Adam, as Adam leans back on his heals and wiggles his feet, catching the smaller stones in the clench of his toes, then spreading his toes wide, the pebbles falling out. He does this several times then deems the path worthy and walks cautiously down the path, stopping every few feet to pluck a piece of grass between his small fingers, sniff it and let it fall, the wind catching the blade, twirling it in the air behind the walking pup.

Will is silent. His eyes fixed on the pup, slowly blinking, his mouth slightly open, taking in the fresh air. His nostrils flare when a gust of wind picks up the scent of Hannibal's roses, taking in the smell with a deep breath. He sighs it out and closes his eyes.

When he opens them again, Hannibal is sure he can see wetness but then Will is gone, following after Adam, his steps solid and sure on the uneven ground, even barefoot. Hannibal wonders if Will wandered the bayou in his youth, bare foot, climbing over tree trunks, unperturbed by the idea of crocodiles and snakes, happy to fish or take a small boat out, lay in the sun.

He's brought back from his reverie when he hears Adam squeak and Will let out a quiet throaty laugh. He follows the sound, down the winding path and spots the pair sharing an apple freshly plucked from a tree. It's early in the season, the apple will be sour and by the look on Adam's face it really is. The pup turns his head and spits the crumbling fruit out into the grass.

Will looks quickly at Hannibal, his mouth open and ready to apologize but Hannibal just raises a hand and shakes his head minutely. The corners of Will's mouth twitch up in the subtle smile Hannibal likes and turns back to Adam who is now wiping his tongue on his arm and shaking his head like a dog.

Will chuckles. "Come on pup, let's look at the rest of the garden." He holds his hand out for Adam but the boy ignores him, instead turning to face Hannibal. He doesn't look up to his face, only stands and waits.

Hannibal raises his eyebrows and says "Well, I'm happy to take you on a tour, of course."

They walk through the rest of the garden, Hannibal stopping once in a while to explain this and that, rare flowers, the vegetable patch and what is growing there. Will takes it all in, nodding along to Hannibal's stories, turning to face the sun once in a while, closing his eyes.

While they walk, Adam skips ahead then circles back to join them, again and again. He forgets to be wary of the grass and eventually lays down in the middle of the lawn stretching his arms above his head and sighing, his eyes closed to the light of the sun.

Hannibal feels the warmth of a long lost memory blur to the surface, small arms stretched out on dark grass, sun dappled skin, a daisy chain placed on fair hair, a child's laughter, the smell of earth and damp leaves. He closes his eyes and lets the memory play out, undisturbed by its contents for once, it curls the corner of his lip.

Will is watching him with a similar smile when he opens his eyes and the two share eye contact for a brief moment, then Will is looking away to his pup still splayed on the grass, is hands sweeping the blades to and fro in wide swipes, like making a snow angel with no snow. Will laughs and joins the boy, laying down with a grunt and doing the same sweeping motion making Adam laugh. Laying flat like this Will's baggy t-shirt falls across his body and shows the gentle rise of his abdomen, low down the slight curve of his pregnancy showing.

Hannibal thinks back to the dead omega laying on the cold steel of the lab table. Their bodies similar in progression. It makes his heart tick faster for a second before Hannibal stamps down the feeling.

He walks past them into the kitchen to get them all a drink of water and can hear Will asking Adam about the shapes in the clouds, what animals they look like. The pup never answers his mothers questions but Will keeps asking anyway, engaging in a one sided conversation, possibly hoping that one day the boy will find his voice.

Later that day, in the darkness of the study, lid only by firelight and the small lamp on the side table next to Will, the man turning the pages of another picture book, this one on ancient Rome, Hannibal asks “Do you know what autism is Will?”

Will’s finger stops skimming the line of text he’s slowly reading. He looks up at Hannibal’s shoe.

“No. But it was a word thrown around by some of my teachers when I was small.” He sighs and closes the book with a quiet thump. “Look Hannibal, “ He pushes a hand through his hair, “I know Adam isn’t a typical little boy. Even I know that he should speak by now, should be reading, should be…” he trails off.

“There’s nothing wrong with him Will.” Hannibal says reassuringly.

Will’s eyes climb higher to Hannibal’s hand holding a glass of dark red wine, his brows furrowed.

“What I mean to say there’s nothing wrong with being neuro-divergent. Adam’s brain is just wired a different way.” Hannibal clarifies.

“Neuro…”

“Divergent.” Hannibal finishes. “It’s an all round term used by people with autism, ADHD, ADD , etc.”

Will nods slowly. “My Daddy would yell that his pup isn’t a retard. Because I couldn’t read or count like other kids my age. He took me out of school pretty soon after, like I said before.”

“I remember our conversation.”

Will settles back into his chair further, bringing his legs up onto the seat and tucking them under himself, his elbow on the chair arm.

“There’s no cure.” Will states.

“There’s nothing to fix.” Hannibal counters and takes a sip of his wine.

Will lets out a gentle smile, his head tilting back to reveal his slim neck, the scars standing out in the hazy orange hue of the firelight.

“Thank you, for letting us into the garden.” Will sighs, he sucks his bottom lip into his mouth, rolling his lip between his teeth, his eyes on the flames in the fireplace.

“You’re very welcome Will.”

_____

Jack Crawford takes a team to Johns Hopkins to speak with the head of the Maternity and Obstetrics Dr Rita Draper. Hannibal joins them if only to walk the halls of his old stomping ground. His face is a well recognized one and Hannibal silently revels in his recognition standing out among the group, Jack usually the one to make others step aside as he prowls the corridors of the BAU. He notices the smirk on Beverly’s face and returns the smirk with a feigned look of innocence.

Jack takes the lead when introducing himself and his team, Hannibal being the last to announce as they enter Dr Draper's office. Hannibal hears Beverly huff and Zeller coughs into his fist as they move into the room, taking places by the window and bookshelves. Jack's antics not unnoticed.

Dr Draper is a stern faced Alpha, slight of build but tall. Her dark eyes narrow and she purses her bright red lips as she looks Hannibal up and down.

"Thee Doctor Lecter?" She asks as she holds out her hand to shake his own.

He takes it, her grip is firm but not threatening "Unless you know of another?" He teases. Draper smirks and shakes his hand once.

"The stories of your time here are still told to the newbies. And no one has beaten your success rate in trauma surgery, as far as I know." She says as she takes her chair behind her desk. Behind her on the wall are certificates of her qualifications, framed in expensive frames but not ostentatious. On her desk sit two framed photos, presumably her children and other family, they face away from whoever sits opposite her, their contents hidden.

Jack clears his throat to gain attention without forcing the room to look at him, professional but still a higher ranking alpha being overlooked for another alphas achievements. Hannibal wants to roll his eyes but refrains.

Draper snaps hers eyes to Jack. "I understand you would like to investigate my staff, Agent Crawford."

"We believe our killer may be using information found here among your patients to select his victims. Any assistance you can give us will be greatly appreciated. And we'll try and stay out of your way as much as possible."

Draper nods and leans back in her chair, the leather creaks beneath her.

“Patient information is confidential Agent Crawford, unless you have a warrant.”

“We know which of the victims came here for care. We already have that information. What we need is staff information. Who was working when and where.”

Draper nods again and sighs. “You killer could be another patient, a janitor, an electrician.”

“We’re investigating all possible leads Doctor Draper.” Jack replies firmly. He knows they’re searching for a needle in a haystack.

“Of course.” She replies frowning. “I remember one of the omegas I’ve seen in the news. Complicated pregnancy. Complicated birth. He was so optimistic through out. I was saddened to hear of his death.”

“Your help in this matter will be invaluable Doctor Draper.” Hannibal says.

Draper looks up at him as he stands by the window overlooking the hospital gardens. She nods and stands.

“Gentleman, where do we begin?”

Hours turn into days as the investigation leads them nowhere at Johns Hopkins. Three of the victims were treated there during their pregnancy. Nursing staff, night staff, day staff, all questioned.

What they can't do is talk to temporary or agency staff if they no longer work there. Beverly reveals to the team that Agency Staff don't leave their personal details at the hospital, only their agency number that can't be traced. Jack grunts and swears under his breath.

Hannibal doesn't join the team with every interview, joining only when he can. He does offer his moral support and coffee. Zeller calls him a lucky bastard but takes the coffee anyway.

It's only on the third day of investigating that Jack calls him to join them on an interview with a night nurse they suspect knows more than she's letting on and has been called back for a second interview, this time at Quantico.

Hannibal meets Jack at his office. As he enters the room he notices Jack glance at his hands, his shoulders dipping in disappointment to see them empty of coffee.

"Good Morning Jack." Hannibal smiles.

"Morning Doctor Lecter. Thank you for coming in today." Jack says as he sits at his desk, his hands folding together.

"Like I said Jack, I'm happy to help find your killer."

Jack nods as Hannibal takes the chair opposite. He pauses then hands a manila folder to Hannibal, who opens it, scanning the first page.

"We don't think she's the killer, but she knows something." Jack says. "Got her story mixed up when questioned, said she wasn't working on a night she was, then later said she was sick."

Hannibal hums in agreement, reading the profile. Jack clears his throat and beings reciting what Hannibal has read.

“Melissa Brownlie, 32. Maryland resident for 15 years. Born in Minnesota. Single. Beta. Labour and delivery Nurse. Worked at Johns Hopkins for three years. Before that she worked at The University of Maryland Medical Centre.”

“Impressive resume.” Hannibal says turning the page to reveal a photo of the woman in question. Hannibal notes that she’s rather plain looking. Neither pretty nor unattractive. There’s a pleasant symmetry to her face but nothing remarkable. Straight brown hair, pale eyes. A thin lipped but generous mouth.

Jack stands and goes to the sad looking coffee machine in the corner of his office. He pours himself and Hannibal a mug then returns to his seat. Hannibal doesn’t take the proffered coffee and Jack sets it down.

“Was she working when the victims were at Johns Hopkins as patients?” Hannibal asks.

“Yes, and she worked at The UMMC when victims were patients there too.”

Hannibal looks up at Jack with his eyebrows raised. “Thats interesting.”

“I thought so too.” Jack replies, his mouth a thin line.

Before Hannibal can reply there is a knock on the door. Jack calls for them to enter and his receptionist introduces Melissa Brownlie in a brief but courteous manner then leaves, closing the door behind them.

One thing that Hannibal notices first is that Ms Brownlie couldn’t possibly be the killer, her small stature would make it impossible to lift a dead body into a tree and tie it there, unless she were working with someone else and there’s no evidence to suggest two killers.

Melissa Brownlie takes in Jacks office and Alphas within with apprehension. Jack strides toward her, his hand held out, a smile on his face. She takes his hand in a brief handshake and mutters her greeting.

Hannibal only rises from his seat as she moves to take hers to not impose or stand over her. She takes him in and raises her hand in greeting. He smiles and nods.

Jack sits down with a deep sigh “Ms Brownlie, how are you today?”

She glances at Hannibal then back to Jack. “Wondering why I’ve been asked to drive an hour here on my only day off this week.” She says shrewdly.

Jack chuckles “I apologize for taking up your time. We would like your incite. You’re the only Labour and Delivery Nurse that has worked at both the UMMC and Johns Hopkins.”

Melissa nods and goes to pop her thumb nail in her mouth, looks at Hannibal, then aborts the movement. It’s a tell and she knows this. Hannibal notes her self awareness, this isn’t the first time she has been interviewed in relation to a crime.

The interview goes as smoothly as it can. Melissa answers Jacks questions in short succinct replies. Jack doesn’t push, Melissa doesn’t offer information not asked for.

Once she leaves the office, Jack’s receptionist escorting Melissa back to the entrance of the building, the two Alphas sit in silence for a few minutes. Each contemplating their experience.

Jack is the first to speak. “She’s hiding something.”

Hannibal nods “but is it the something we’re looking for?”

thread

Chapter Notes

> Hello Gorgeous,
> This chapter was so hard to write for some reason. Not like feeling hard just getting my thought down in a readable manner. Anyway, I hope you like it. I wrote it for you.
>
> Love you forever.

"You have missed your last 3 appointments Mason." Hannibal says as he takes his chair, unbuttoning his suit jacket as he does, the motion smooth and well practiced. He watches as Mason Verger marches in the room, removing his coat and dropping it onto the chaise. Mason undoes his own jacket and flops into the chair opposite Hannibal.

"Time must have gotten away from me, silly thing it is." Mason smiles, a gleam in his eye Hannibal can't place.

"I have a 48 hour cancellation policy. Which you have ignored. That's very rude Mason."

Mason laughs, his mouth open too wide to be sincere. "Don't want to be rude. Don't worry about the money Doctor, I'll still pay you."

Hannibal doesn't want to sneer but he can feel his top lip begin to curl. Instead he says "I'm afraid one more missed appointment will result in termination of our Doctor/Patient relationship."

Mason seems to delight in the idea of pushing Hannibal enough to terminate their contract thus breaking the mandated rules of his punishment by a judge.

"I'd hate to lose a relationship. Papa always said relationships are important. Who we interact with is important. Lasting impressions. You know." His hand sweeps the room in a

directionless flutter.

Hannibal clears his throat, a nervous tick he seems to have picked up from Will. “I agree.” He crosses his legs, foot over knee.

Mason seems to slump further in his chair, lazy shoulders slipping further down the back of the leather. He taps his foot.

“Yes, lasting impressions. Some people leave a scent behind you know? Funny thing, scents. They’re so unique. Some are ugly. Make me sneeze.” Mason rubs under his nose with the back of his hand and laughs again. “Like you Doctor.”

Hannibal raises his eyebrows minutely, his head tilting to the left a little.

“Oh you don’t make me *sneeze* but I can smell you have a family.” Mason’s lip now curls into a sneer, a sheen of disgust falls over his feature. “You reek of pup.” Mason lets the last ‘p’ pop between his lips.

That morning Adam had leaned against Hannibal as he had cooked their breakfast. A rare, delicate show of affection. Hannibal, used to the scents of the Omega and his pup always surrounding him had not noticed the scent of pup on his clothes until he got in his car. Knowing he had a spare suit hanging in his office closet he didn’t return to the house to change. Unfortunately he had already worn the office suit and not replaced it. A slip of mind Hannibal was now regretting.

“I have relatives staying with me. A cousin and their pup.”

“Family affairs are best left to the family.” Mason shrugs. “I find it best to stay away from pups now days. Don’t want another Judge slapping the back of my hand.”

“Indeed.” Hannibal agrees.

Mason's eyes suddenly narrow, his face blank. Suddenly he stands up and starts to saunter around the room, touching the books on the shelf, the small trinkets, the desk. Hannibal watches from his seat until Mason moves behind him out of view. Hannibal then focuses on the empty chair in front of him, neither scared nor willing to play Mason's game of cat and mouse.

He hears the snick of a pocket knife being flicked open. It's not until the blade appears in his peripheral vision that he turns slightly to see the knife by his head. The light from the window reflect on the blade, shining a sudden bight flash into Hannibal's eye.

"This is my Papa's knife. He used to test the fat on a pig. He gave it to me before he died."

Hannibal sits impassive, neither reacting to the knife nor Mason's words. He simply waits.

Mason lowers the knife from Hannibal's eye line then rounds his chair and takes the empty seat opposite Hannibal once more, he holds the knife by its handle and starts the flick the blade in and out of its casing.

"I remember walking the swine fairs with my father, looking over the competition. Papa's little silver knife ever ready to slip out of his waistcoat and into a pig's back to check the depth of fat. Oh, those were some good, funny times." Mason recalls. His eyes snap to Hannibal's own, his pupils dilate slightly.

"Papa would stick 4-H show pigs who thought everyone was their friend, scrubbed in milk and baby powder. Such coddled things. Their scent not unlike that of a pup." Mason flicks the knife open and closed once more.

"Your education was an odd one. What else did your father teach you Mason?" Hannibal asks uncrossing his legs then folding his knee over the opposite one.

Mason laughs, that manic cackling way that makes Hannibal's skin itch. He watches spittle gather on Mason's lower lip and wants to pull the man's skin from his face and feed it to him.

“Wouldn’t you like to know.”

Hannibal takes in a deep breath and lets it out. “Maybe it’s something we discuss another time, if you’re uncomfortable sharing."

Mason stops his giggles and slams the blade into the soft leather of the chair, once, twice, leaving it standing to attention in the soft grey leather.

“I don’t like sharing Doctor Lecter.”

Hannibal’s mouth opens slightly at the damage being done to his Valencia chair, the damage extensive and unforgivable. He raises his eyes to Mason’s and Mason’s smile turns into the too wide crocodile smile of his, too much teeth.

“Oh dear look what I’ve done” Mason huffs an embarrassed laugh “Please send me the bill.”

_____-

Once Mason leaves, Hannibal touches the damaged leather on the arm of the seat Mason attacked. The slices are clean and deep. The metal under the padding probably scratched too. This will need to be buffed out, the padding and leather replaced. Not a simple task. Matching leather is notoriously hard, the dye never producing the same shade, he will have to have both chairs recovered. And he will not be billing Mason Verger for the money. Alpha pride in having his own extensive assets not be questioned. He lets the growl that’s been building in the back of his throat out and returns to his desk to find a local furniture restorer on his iPad.

_____-

At the end of his day, after apologizing to his last 2 clients about the damage to his chair, Hannibal finally leaves his office. He's five minutes from his house when he receives a call from Jack Crawford.

He answers using the cars Bluetooth. "Hullo Jack, how can I help you?"

"Doctor Lecter we've had some more information about Melissa Brownlie. Can you come into the office?"

No please, no pleasantries. Just Jack's customary brashness. If Hannibal weren't driving he would spend a moment in his mind palace cutting out Jack's tongue.

"I am available in the morning, I've only just left my office." Hannibal offers, not one to give himself or his time away too easily lest people become demanding.

"Are you able to come now? I'd really like your incite into what we've found." Jack pushes, sounding slightly impatient.

Hannibal doesn't audibly sigh but he wants too. Instead he sneers. Because Jack can't see that.

"I have had a rather trying day Agent Crawford. I feel like I wouldn't be able to offer you very much of my mind."

Hannibal can feel Jack's frustration at not being obeyed through the speakers in his car, it's a steady thrum of thick airwaves and the rattling of old bones. Hannibal does close his eyes then for a moment hoping to catch Jack's discreet growl.

He waits for Jack to push harder, demand Hannibal's time like he owns him, be the more powerful Alpha, but Jack is pragmatic and accepts Hannibal's decline with a huffing acceptance and ends the call.

Hannibal pulls into his driveway, turns off the engine and exits his car. As he takes his keys from his pocket he notices a small blue car sitting across the road, the engine running. As Hannibal looks at the driver trying to discern their features the car pulls away, tires squealing a little on the road as it does.

He finds Will and Adam in the garden on the rug he gave them for their room. He makes a note to let Will know where the picnic blanket is. He stands in the backdoor for a moment observing.

Will is laying on his back, his arm crooked behind his head giving him a pillow. His undershirt is riding up low on his belly above his waist band, showing just a sliver of pale scarred skin. His eyes are closed, although the sun is low in the sky.

Adam is coloring in a picture of a tree. Green and brown this time, the dog beneath the tree with a bone in its mouth is pink of course. Hannibal strides across the lawn in firm steps, making his presence obvious lest he scare them both.

Will pops open one eye and looks up at Hannibal as he stops at the edge of the rug. Adam continues coloring.

“Hi Hannibal.”

“Hello Will.”

Will sits up, rolling onto his side first then folding his legs criss cross in front of himself. He runs a hand through his hair and looks at Adam. He’s nervous, Hannibal notes.

“I didn’t know what else to bring out here to sit on.” He gestures to the rug under them. “I knew this would probably the least expensive thing to get grass stains on.”

Hannibal didn't want to tell Will the rug was actually over $2000, cheaper than any picnic blanket he owned.

"It's quite alright."

Will looked awkward for a moment, rubbing the back of his neck. "Do you want us to come inside?"

"No, I'm going to prepare dinner. Will you and Adam join me at the table today?"

Will frowns, his brow furrowing, a delicate line appearing between his brows. "Both of us?"

"If you think Adam would be amenable."

Will nods then leans forward, running his hand through Adam's dark curls.

"I will let you know when the meal is ready." Hannibal states then turns back to the house.

_____-

Dinner is a simple pasta dish, Amatriciana, tomato, guanciale, Romano cheese and because Hannibal likes the variation he adds some onion. For his and Will's portion he adds slices of sautéed thigh from his latest kill, a bullish Alpha who decided he didn't like Hannibal's suit when visiting the dry cleaners. Comments on Hannibal's attire, especially he custom made Pal Zileri from Italy, are not overlooked very easily, or at all in this case.

He prepared a side of steamed broccoli for Adam, noting the pups particular pleasure when eating the vegetable. Green trees Will had once said. He selects a bottle of

Montepulciano, a red wine from the Abruzzo region of Italy, and fills a glass with milk for Adam.

He sits Will to his right, then Adam on his left, placing a cushion on the seat so the pup is slightly elevated and not banging his elbows on the table.

As he puts the plates in front of Adam then Will, he notices Will's small smile.

"Will?"

Will ducks his head, his fringe falling over his brow and shakes it a little.

"My Dad would put a milk crate on the seat so I could eat at the table. When we had a table. It wasn't often." He shrugs.

Hannibal sits and places his napkin on his lap and waits. Will picks up his napkin and does the same, then he watches as Adam picks his own up, sniffs it, pinches it between his fingers feeling the material. He scrunches his nose.

"Place it on your lap please." Hannibal says, his tone calm, patient.

After a moment the boy does as he's asked and drops the napkin on his lap, folded still and now is a small pile. Will goes to stand to correct it and Hannibal quietly raises his hand to still the action. Will sits again slowly.

"He did as he was asked. I didn't specify how to put it on his lap, only that he should."

Will lets out a nervous huff of laughter. "Okay."

Will waits for Hannibal to take the first bite, etiquette stating the Alpha eats first. Hannibal then watches Will as his lips close around a forkful of thigh meat, his pulse quickening a beat, then leveling out again.

“This is delicious, thank you Hannibal.”

Adam hums, his monotone voice breaking the attention of the two men. Will puts his cutlery down and reaches across the table and places Adam’s fork into his hand.

“Gonna have to use this today buddy. No finger food at the table.”

Adam pouts slightly, his eyes never meeting Will’s, then digs into his pasta, shoveling it into his mouth the grace of a 5 year old, which he is.

They eat quietly for a while, Adam humming around his mouthfuls of steamed broccoli, Will eating as politely as he can. He’s the first to break the silence.

“You saw Mason today.” He says hesitantly.

“Ah yes, I apologize, I have not changed my suit.”

Will shakes his head “No, no I didn’t mean… I just noticed it, that’s all.”

“Mason has decided to resume his therapy.” Hannibal states, the edge of distaste in his voice evident.

Will huffs a laugh again, its bitter and Hannibal can taste Will’s displeasure in the air between them.

“Can’t imagine what he’s telling you. No wait. I can. Blah blah Papa this, blah blah Papa that?”

Hannibal smiles and takes a sip of his wine, swirling it over his tongue. “I’m afraid Doctor Patient confidentiality doesn’t allow me to discuss my therapy sessions with Mason.”

“Did he show you Papa’s knife yet?” Will growls. Hannibal can see the blade of the knife glint in Will’s downturned eyes, his lashes touch the delicate skin under his eye, fluttering.

“He stabbed my chair.” Hannibal allows.

There’s a pause then Will lets out a barking laugh, its rich, throaty and delightful. He places his fork down and puts his napkin over his mouth as he laughs, smothering the sound somewhat. Hannibal wants to reach out and pull the material from his clenched fist to allow the notes of Will’s crowing to fill the room. He refrains.

“I’m glad someone finds it amusing.” Hannibal sniffs. "I will have to have both chairs reupholstered. And had to apologize to my afternoon patients about the damage.”

Will laughs even louder for a moment then coughs and tempers down the sound to a low chuckle. He ducks his head and sighs. “Sorry.” He says, a smile still playing on his lips.

“It’s quite alright. It’s nice to hear you laugh Will.”

Will meets his eyes for a brief second. “It’s nice to have a reason too.” He looks back at his plate and lifts his fork. “Sorry about your chair.”

“No you’re not.” Hannibal smiles.

“No, I’m not.” Will agrees chuckling again.

_____

That evening Hannibal sits in the den with Will while the news reports on the latest goings on in Baltimore. The sound is low so as not to disturb Adam who is dozing on the sofa beside Will, the pup has his toy car clutched in his hand, his eyes blinking slowly.

It feels so devastatingly domestic Hannibal feels his breath stutter in his chest momentarily. The tug behind is ribs blossoms with a sudden urgency, he tempers down the feeling by taking a sip of his wine.

Will has one of Adam's shirts on his lap, he brought it downstairs with him after dinner and requested a sewing kit. Adam had torn the garment while playing with a stick in the garden, Will informed him, then cried for 30 minutes. Will told him that he would fix it. It's his favorite apparently, yellow with a red firetruck on the front, the words 'Lets go' embroidered on the front in childish writing.

Hannibal had offered to replace the item but Will insisted he fix it. Hannibal acquiesced, feeling reproachful after Will asked if Hannibal would be throwing away the chairs in his office.

Hannibal watches Will's fingers guide the needle and thread through the edges of the fabric, gathering the tatters together in slow precise movements creating a ladder stitch, the chore obviously one he has performed before.

Will pauses, his hand hovering over the next stitch and raises his head in Hannibal's direction.

"Am I bothering you? I can do this upstairs." Will offers.

"No, I'm just admiring your technique. An invisible stitch is difficult if not practiced often."

Will shrugs, the movement uneven, and sighs. “Never had the money to replace things, had to learn how to fix things.” He continues his efforts, the large tear becoming smaller with each rise and fall of Will’s hand.

Hannibal takes a deep breath. “There was a time when I would mend my own clothes through necessity.” He says quietly.

Will looks up at him again, their eyes catching quickly, Will dropping his gaze. Searching for the lie Hannibal realizes.

“I’m sure it helped you learn how to stitch things other than clothing.”

“It was a skill that became quite useful in surgery, yes.”

“Mason…” Will whispers, his hand never stopping, the movement now a little shaky. “Mason would push sewing needles into the skin until they couldn’t be seen.”

Hannibal closes his eyes, imagines a younger, softer looking Will, his hair a little shorter, his body a little thinner, standing before Mason Verger, the man smiling his crocodile smile, pinched in his stubby fingers a sewing needle.

“I couldn’t find them all.” Will sighs. “Probably light up security at an airport like the forth of July.” He huffs. The humor falls flat.

Hannibal opens his eyes to see Will use a small pair of scissors to cut the end of the thread, the shirt repaired. He tucks the items back into the small sewing kit and places it on the coffee table in front of him and lifts up the shirt to inspect his work. The line of stitches is invisible, the fabric pulled together neatly, the damage looks like a fold rather than a repair, the fix visible but not unattractive.

Will turns to Adam, still laying beside him on the sofa, his eyes closed. He gives the pup's shoulder a little shake, Adam's eyes open blearily, a little hazy from his nap.

Without a word Will tugs at Adam until he is sitting upright facing him, then produces the repaired garment from behind his back with a smile, holding it up for Adam to see that it is once again whole.

Adam squeals and begins to clumsily remove the t-shirt he has on. Will helps him, pulling the sleeve off of one arm, then the other. He pulls the firetruck shirt over Adams head, the boys curls fluffing up from rubbing against the fabric. Adam hums contently, running his fingers over the repaired hole.

Hannibal closes his eyes as the memory of sun bleached room fills his memory palace, the light drowns out any details he could observe, before him, too close to focus fully on, slender gentle hands hold out a white garment for him, a smile on the face behind it, flickering into focus then gone again. He watches as he reaches out for it, the warm fabric held under his fingers is soft, so soft. He hears a woman's voice let out a tender laugh, the sound makes his skin tingle, a glow of light caresses his eyelids and he feels fingers push his fringe off of his forehead.

When he opens his eyes the den is empty.

house to house

Chapter Notes

> Hello Gorgeous,
> ok so this chapter is long and I couldn't find a place to split it that didn't make both bits boring. So it's a long chapter. sorry its mostly plot. And no Will. its necessary ok? dont get mad.
>
> I love you <3 <3

Hannibal sat in Jack Crawfords office with the file on Melissa Brownlie in his hands. He read the documents in front of him in full, taking in all the information.

Jack was pacing behind him, a small distraction but Hannibal couldn't blame him. The dates of Melissa's employment at each Maternity and Obstetrics Clinics in the Baltimore area matched many of the dates the dead Omegas were there, either giving birth, or as a place for their main care. Only one didn't match. The latest victim. The break in the pattern. The brunette, pregnant Omega, currently laying deep in the basement of the building on a steel tray, behind a locked door.

"These details are rather damning." Hannibal says as he closes the file.

"They sure are." Jack grunts.

"There a few discrepancies, employment dates ending before the death of the Omega from that Hospital. Some even years."

Jack stops his pacing. He runs his hand down his face. Hannibal notes how tired he looks. This case has been a media frenzy. The death of one Omega in the manner they have died is news worthy, for seven to have their lives ended the same way? It's national, if not international, news. And it's all sitting on the shoulders of Jack Crawford.

Jack struck Hannibal as a man with deep seated roots in his more instinctual Alpha nature. Protect an omega. Cherish an omega. Jack's wife Bella was an omega, she was a beautiful, intelligent woman, highly educated and with a sharp wit. Hannibal liked her immensely and understood why she and Jack made a good couple. She was the light to his dark, the smile to his frown.

Jack pulled out the chair to his desk and slumped into the seat with a sigh.

"She could have watched them. Kept tabs on them before striking."

"How was her employment? It notes in her file she wasn't fired, maybe discreetly let go?"

Jack huffs out a bitter laugh. "Nope, they all loved her. Her work record is squeaky clean."

Hannibal puts the file back on Jack's desk, lifting his coffee from it as he does. He takes a sip and is grateful Jack has a coffee machine in his office and he's not subjected to the swill in the break room, he could smell it as he walked past and vowed to never drink it.

"Scenario." Jack says catching Hannibal's attention. "She works these places, keeps her nose clean, does her job. And watches. She picks out the families she deems unacceptable, stalks them, kills the omega."

"It seems too simple. What are her motives?" Hannibal asks.

"Jealousy. She's a beta, she can't have the bond that an Alpha has with an Omega."

Hannibal smirks. The bond theory has been proven to be just that. A theory. A fairytale told to young Alphas and Omegas to make them only seek each other out as mates. To keep the genes that create the genetic varied alive. Elitist ideology to keep Alpha's 'pure bred', in an attempt to hold out dated views of societal norms. It's archaic. Hannibal's own views on Omega's have never been kind, his experience of Omega's within his social circle are simpering, weak minded pigs, he doesn't believe in 'bonds' or 'pure breeding'.

Will has proven again and again that Omegas can be vicious when needed, strong, protective. Capable of killing when necessary. He wonders if Will would ever choose to kill, as Hannibal does. Not to protect himself or Adam, but just for the thrill of it. Rid the world of pigs by Hannibal's side, an equal in the hunt.

Jack clears his throat and Hannibal realizes he was waiting for a reply.

"Jack, you're an educated man, surely you know it's not all down to a bond that keeps Alpha and Omegas together. It takes commitment, from both parties. And there are plenty of Alpha beta couples, as well as omega beta couples that live very long happy lives."

Jack sighs and scratches at his stubble. Hannibal estimates it's at least two days worth.

"Maybe she's a believer."

A tap on the door alerts them to Alana Bloom entering the office. She's wearing a pretty blue wrap dress and sensible heels. Hannibal has always appreciated Alana's dress sense, subtle and feminine. The thin smile she has on her face suggests she's not happy, wether it be because of the case or because of Hannibal being here, he's not sure.

She gives Jack and polite hello, the smile not meeting her eyes. When she looks at Hannibal it softens. Not happy about the case then, or not happy with Jack.

"Doctor Bloom, thank you for joining us." Jack stands as she comes further into the room and takes the seat beside Hannibal, she reaches out and puts her hand on the top of his arm. It's familiar and indicates she is in support of his presence.

"Have I missed anything?"

"Doctor Lecter and I are discussing Melissa Brownlie."

Alana takes the file Jack holds out to her. She opens it and scans the top document, frowning.

“These dates, do they match the murders?”

“She was employed at the time the families were at each facility. There are some overlaps given the gaps when certain families were having children and some weren’t.”

“Were any of them her patients?” She flips through other pages in the file.

“It might be worth contacting the victims partners? Asking them if they recognize her?” Hannibal suggests.

Jack nods. “I’ve got a few Agents ready to do family visits, ask them some follow up questions now the dust has settled somewhat.”

Alana nods, the downturn of her lips give her a delicate pout. “I doubt those traumatized families can offer anything more than they have already Jack.”

“Theres no evidence, no leads other than Melissa Brownlie and that might just be coincidental. It makes sense to ask again if they remember anyone suspicious watching them, talking to them. And now we have the chance to ask them if they remember Melissa.” Jack says sitting back in his chair, his chest puffed out somewhat. “We’ll start with the first family, work our way up to the newest.”

“Would it be beneficial for Alana or myself to be there Agent Crawford? To offer support to the family if needed?”

Alana snaps her gaze to Hannibal, her mouth open slightly. “Hannibal.”

“I apologize Alana, I shouldn’t offer your time.”

“No no, I’m happy give my support to the families, its just…” she tucks a piece of hair behind her ear. “Your patients?”

“Let me worry about that Alana.” He puts a placating hand on her own on her lap.

In truth Hannibal couldn’t currently care less about his patients. He had already referred two recently, their barbaric actions towards their omega spouses, told to him with a gleam in their eye, had revolted him. Where once he would feed into their violent nature, whisper words of encouragement under the guise of counseling, after Will… after Will he finds himself not quite finding that same enjoyment. Not to be misunderstood, he never found violence committed toward an omega or woman to be pleasurable, it was how far he could manipulate his patient into thinking their actions where of their own volition. Did they hear his voice in their mind as they raised their fist to strike again?

Now, as a patient sits in the chair opposite him, talking about their domineering of their female or omegan partner, Hannibal has lost the taste for it. So referred they had to be.

The only patient of worth currently was Mason Verger. And after missing his last three appointments, turning up on the deadline for referral, maybe Mason could do with some of his own medicine and wait for Hannibal. A petty game of cat and mouse.

“If you’re sure Doctor Lecter?” Jack asks.

“Quite.” He replies with a small nod of his head. Would Hannibal like to see the aftermath and suffering of human beings during a traumatic time in their life? Yes. He would. Would he also like to offer then counsel? Whisper words of revenge into their ears and watch a fire begin to grow? Yes. He would. Theres nothing quite like watching the rising tide of vengeance pass behind the glistening grief filled eyes of the traumatized. Will’s eyes burn like the walls of an ice cave struck by dawn light when he mentions the Red Dragon, or Mason Verger. Hannibal wonders if he could convince Will to hunt Mason with him. Tear him apart, push needles into his skin, butcher, then consume him. Display what’s left of him trussed up like a butchered pig on a silver tray, an apple between his too white teeth.

Their meeting is cut short when Jack receives a call that requires his full attention. By the deflated slope of Jack's shoulders, Hannibal can only presume its a higher up demanding he explain why they haven't caught their killer yet.

He and Alana leave Jack's office quietly and politely, the promise of calls when the rounds of family visits start.

They walk in silence to the lab together, neither saying exactly why they both heard that way, their feet seeming to act on their own accord. Before the door of the lab swings open Alana stops Hannibal with a hand on his forearm.

"Are you ok?" She has a small frown on her lips, her forehead creasing.

Hannibal offers her a small smile. "I'm quite alright thank you, yourself? I apologize for not asking sooner."

"I'm ok." She pauses. "You just seem… distracted."

"This case is deeply concerning." Hannibal nods.

"Because of the omega patient you have? What was his name again?"

"That and the brutality of the crime. Violence against omegas is barbaric. As a man and an Alpha, I find myself affected by this somewhat." Hannibal side steps the question about Will's name. He knows Alana notices but she's too polite to push again.

"Are you sure you want to talk to the families?" She frowns.

"Of course, any assistance to help them find closure would be my pleasure."

She nods. Her brow furrowing again. Alana Bloom, always concerned for others but too polite to get to the root of the problem. In truth this case is disturbing to Hannibal, the murder of the omegas, the injuries to the pups left behind, the pregnant omega laying just meters away who looks strikingly like Will. It is unsettling. Hannibal's motivations to join the Agents in the follow up interviews remain his own though.

_____

Inside the lab there are no bodies laying out, their pale grey skin, eyeless skulls, missing body parts are hidden away.

Beverly sits at her desk focused on the paperwork in her hand so deeply intrenched in her work she doesn't acknowledge Alana and Hannibal as they enter.

Zeller is the one to great them much to Hannibal's chargrin.

"Doctor Bloom, Doctor Lecter. How can we help you?" He gives a small smile to Alana as she smiles in greeting to him, a light blush dusting his cheek bones.

"We will be joining you for the follow up interviews with the victims families." Alana offers.

"Oh good!" Pipes up Price as he rounds his desk to join them where they stand. "A family outing!"

"I call shotgun!" Zeller says quickly smiling when Price huffs.

"We're hoping someone might recognize out potential suspect." Hannibal says.

"Ah yes, Melissa… something…" Zeller rolls his wrist.

“Brownlie.” Price finishes for him. “Well lets hope so. The fingerprint was a bust and we have nothing else to go on forensic wise, do we Bev.” Price looks over his shoulder at Beverly still engrossed in the file in her hand. Hannibal notices she hasn’t turned the page she was on when they walked in.

“BEV!” Zeller shouts.

Beverly snaps her head up at the shout, her eyes look a little glassy, her brow furrowed.

“Earth to Beverly.” Price sing songs and ducks the pencil thrown at him from her desk.

“Ok ready to go, you guys coming along too?” Beverly asks grabbing her satchel and standing.

Zeller snickers and moves to his desk to retrieve his own belongings.

The team leave the lab two by two, Alana hanging back to walk with Bev. Just ahead Hannibal listens to Alana ask if Beverly is ok, the woman replies that the last victim was only 4 months pregnant, it was a boy. Alana makes a small sound of upset and rubs her hand on Beverly’s back.

For efficiency sake the team split into two groups. Before they leave the building Beverly catches up to Hannibal and discreetly makes the team plans with him.

Hannibal with Zeller, Alana with Price and Beverly. Beverly says Zeller and Price will behave better when not together, and Alana would be more comfortable without Zeller making ‘moon eyes’ at her. Hannibal chuckles and agrees. While he would prefer to work with Beverly herself, he does not mention it. She gives him a sympathetic eye roll as Zeller claps Hannibal on the shoulder when they get to the cars and asks if he likes Country Music.

Hannibal takes his own car so he can drive, politely turning Zeller down when he offers to drive to the next family.

The streets of Baltimore are grey today, heavy clouds hang low on the horizon with the threat of rain. Hannibal wonders if Adam has ever felt rain on his skin, stamped in puddles in bare feet, blinked raindrops from his eyelashes. If he makes it home at a reasonable time and the rain is falling he'll ask Will if Adam would like to go outside.

_____

Alone time with Zeller is surprisingly not as unpleasant as Hannibal expected. While the Alpha is slightly immature, giggling when a license plate on the car in front looks like it says 'my butt", he's completely professional when talking to the victims families. He asks direct but empathetic questions, listens to the Alpha's speak, never interrupts and takes exhaustive notes. Hannibal cannot fault him.

He even manages to get a few words from a pup sitting on their fathers lap, smiling and offering a hand shake which the pup takes cautiously, eyeing their father as they do. He makes the pup giggle as they leave thanking the little one for their amazing help, giving them a poke on the nose.

When they get back in the car after the third interview and third negative on Melissa Brownlie, Zeller lets out a frustrated huff, pouting and pushing himself back in the car seat.

"Well this has been disappointing." He grouses.

"It would be lovely if we could show them all Melissa Brownlies image and have then indicate her as having treated them." Hannibal agrees.

"Like shooting fish in a barrel." Zeller nods. "Never that easy though."

“Lets hope the others have some good news.”

They drive in silence to the next family. The latest victims family. Fresh in their grief and loss. Hannibal can smell it before they exit the car. The clouds above the house seem to hang heavier than anywhere else. The proverbial depression rain cloud has gathered.

The front door stands open. On the porch of the small detached cottage style house stands an alpha, a cigarette hanging from his relaxed hand. He looks up as Hannibal and Zeller walk up the path.

“You FBI?” He asks.

“My name is Doctor Hannibal Lecter, this is my associate Agent Brian Zeller.” Hannibal holds his hand out to shake the other mans. It’s ignored.

Zeller motions to the entrance and both men walk to the open door.

“My brother has answered all your damned questions.” The man mutters as they pass him to enter the house.

Inside the home are a small group of people. Based on their varying ages Hannibal suspects they are extended family. On the sofa in the lounge to the left of the entrance sits an elderly woman with a man beside her. She’s dressed in black, a long skirt and blouse buttoned up to her neck. Hannibal can see the mating scar peaking just above the delicate collar of her chiffon blouse. She looks up as she sees them enter, then whispers something to the man beside her.

The man looks tired, his skin is pale, his eyes sunken in from lack of sleep, dark circles in the skin below his lashes. He takes a deep breath and stands, his hand held out in front of him to shake.

“My name is Doctor Hannibal Lecter.” Hannibal says taking the mans hand. His grip is weak, his fingers dry.

“Agent Zeller FBI, are you Johnathan Knight?” Zeller states as he too shakes the man’s hand.

“John, please.” The alpha walks down the hall to the left of the entrance, gesturing for them to follow him. Family photos line the walls to the room at the end, holiday snaps and elegant staged wedding images. Hannibal can see that their wedding was a happy affair, there’s one photo of the men dancing, their jackets and ties discarded, their hands twined together as they sway on the dance floor of a darkened room.

In the kitchen John sits at the table to the side of the room. The room is bright, the window letting in the blank grey light from outside. Plants line the window sill in hand painted pots.

John motions to Hannibal and Zeller to join him at the table. They sit in silence for a moment allowing John to gather himself.

“Shit.” John says moving to stand. “Do you guys want something to drink? I should’ve offered you something to drink.”

Hannibal holds his hand up. “We’re quite alright, thank you.”

John sits down again and Hannibal notice Zeller frown at him from the corner of his eye. Apparently Zeller would have liked a drink.

“We’re not here for long Mr Knight. We just have a few follow up questions for you. And a photo we would like you to look at.” Hannibal says pulling a note book from his pocket.

Zeller has already opened his folder and found a blank sheet of paper to take his notes on, and the list of questions already prepared.

“We won’t ask you to go over the details of your day again John.” Says Zeller. “But I do need to know if you’re aware of any new people in your husbands life before the 17th.”

John shakes his head, his eyes downcast. “No? I mean, we didn’t keep tabs on each other. I know we’re not like traditional couples. Me an Alpha and him an omega. He is… was his own man. He met new people all the time.”

“He never mentioned anyone in particular?”

“No, no names.”

“Did he talk about any times he might have bumped into or saw anyone suspicious?”

John chuckles then looks up. “Sorry, it’s just… Ben never thought anyone was suspicious. He believed in the best of people all the time. Regardless of how they treated him. He gave money to any homeless person he saw, helped grandmas cross the street. He’d apologize if someone bumped into him when it wasn’t his fault.”

Zeller nods and scribbles down some notes.

“Did any of these things happen to him before he was taken? Spoke to a homeless person? Was bumped into?”

“He got shoulder checked in a carpark.” Comes a voice from the doorway.

Hannibal turns and sees it was the older woman from the lounge. She walks slowly into the room favouring her left leg, the right one dragging slightly behind her steps.

John stands and offers her his seat, as she moves to his side of the table, she reaches up and pats his cheek.

“He didn’t mention it Mama.” John says to the older woman.

“He wouldn’t have told you.” She sighs “Knew you’d worry.”

Hannibal watches as John takes in that statement. His face filled with pain and grief, a tear escaping his eye. He shakes his head and clenches his fists. The air in the room is suddenly flooded with the scent of anger, it’s rich and spicy. Hannibal and Zeller exchange a look. Zeller raises his eyebrows slightly and Hannibal tips his head to the side. Do we continue? Zeller asks, It’s up to you, Hannibal replies silently.

“Excuse me a moment.” John mumbles and leaves the kitchen, stomping out of the room, out of sight.

Zeller clears his throat. “Can you tell us about the incident with Ben? It happened in a car park?” He readies his pen to take notes.

The older woman nods. “Ben said he was in the Walmart carpark on Hitchin Road, just off Acreman.”

Zeller’s pen scratches across the page, noting the roads.

“What date was that Mrs…?” Hannibal asks

“Mrs Knight. John is my boy. Ben didn’t have any family really, he called me Mama too. It was roughly a week before he was taken.”

Hannibal nods. “Did Ben mention the time?”

“It was around 3pm I think. Ben said he practically lunged at him.”

“Him?” Zeller asked.

“Yes. Said he was slim, brunette, handsome. Ben could never see a fault in people. He said he apologized and asked the guy if he was ok and the guy growled at him, muttered something like ‘Omega scum’ or ‘dirty Omega’, sorry I can’t remember.” She pinches the bridge of her nose, her eyes closed and huffs.

“No this is all very very helpful Mrs Knight.” Zeller replies. “Did he say where the guy went? Or if he had a vehicle?”

“No, no Ben said he walked away, not one for confrontation. He told me about it the next day.”

The men stand and Hannibal holds out his hand for the woman to take. She does. “Thank you for your help Mrs Knight. This information is invaluable.”

“I was going to call you all and tell you, just couldn’t find the time to do it.”

“You’ve told us now, that’s all that matters.” Zeller assures her, he shakes her hand too and they both pack up and leave the kitchen, silent and somber faced.

As they get to the front door John greets them from the porch.

“Did you… did you get what you wanted?” He asks, his voice rough. “Sorry I couldn’t stay in there… I just…”

“It’s not a problem Mr Knight, your mother was very helpful.” Hannibal says, he reaches into his pocket and retrieves the image of Melissa Brownlie. “Could I ask if you recognize this person?”

Hannibal holds it out for John to look at, his brother peers over his shoulder, squinting at the glossy photo.

“Erm… yeah actually. She’s a nurse right? She took our details when Ben and I went… went to the hospital because… you know…” the words get stuck in his throat, tears welling in his eyes again.

Johns brother turns him away by his shoulder and makes a shooing motion to Hannibal and Zeller. Hannibal nods as they leave, walking back to the car together.

As Zeller climbs into the passenger side he takes his phone out of his pocket to message the rest of the team. Once he’s done, Hannibal is already pulling onto the road.

“Well… that complicates things.”

Lies

Chapter Notes

Hello Gorgeous
Will's back! Hurrah! Although I hope you liked Zeller in the last chapter, hes so underrated. I love him really. He's a goofball.
I bet he gives the best cuddles...

Love you so much <3 <3 <3

Hannibal did not expect to be standing on his doorstep at 6am on a Saturday morning talking to a rather portly Police Officer. He also didn't expect the reason to be Will.

Standing in his kitchen, cooking breakfast for himself, as Will and Adam were both still asleep, his doorbell had been rung, it was then followed with three sharp, loud, knocks on his door. The knock was distinctive, only the police knocked that way.

A thousand trains of thought ran through Hannibal's head as he washed his hands, dried them on a towel and straightened his robe. He had hoped that when he was finally arrested for being The Chesapeake Ripper he would be wearing something else. A tailor made suit perhaps, handmade Italian shoes, blood dripping from his lips.

But life is never predictable so silk pajamas and matching robe it was.

Hannibal ran his hand through his hair, neatening it somewhat and unlocked his door. As he opened it, he was surprised to see only one police officer standing there, hands on his hips.

So, not for here to arrest him for being serial killer then. Good.

"Sir, is this your home?" The officer asked, pulling a note pad from his pocket.

“Good Morning Officer. Yes, this is my home. Can I help you?” Hannibal put on the kindest smile he could.

“You’re Hannibal Lecter?” The Officer flipped the page on his notepad, checking what was written.

“Yes, I am.”

“Sir, we’ve had a call regarding someone in your home. We need to do a welfare check.”

“Ah.”

Will. The garden. But, the garden wasn’t overlooked. Unless Will had come to the gate, signaled for help, called to a passerby. Hannibal’s heart hurt at the idea of Will betraying him so. He had taken Will in, never hurt him, never denied him food, had taken care of his pup. Will, who could now read because of Hannibal, who didn’t have to worry about the fate of his pup because of Hannibal, Will who had a bed and food and warmth because of Hannibal.

The officer noticed the change in Hannibal’s demeanor, he looked back to his partner in the car parked on the road, the second Police Officer slowly got out of the car and walked towards the house.

“Can we come Sir?” The Officer asked as his partner joined him at the door.

Hannibal hesitated a moment. The basement was hidden. There were no bodies in the pantry, nothing human in the fridge. He ran a quick mental checklist then stepped back allowing the officers entry.

———-

He led them to the lounge and watched as the men took in the decor around them. They wore scent blockers but Hannibal surmised based on their reaction at the door that they were both Alphas.

He knew they could smell Will and Adam. Their scent had now infused itself into all the surfaces. Not so much in this room as Will preferred the den but enough that confirmed he was here.

“Gentlemen can I offer you a coffee?” Hannibal asked and gestured to the couch.

“No Thank you Sir.” The first officer answered. “My name is Officer Raymond, this is Officer Merry.” Merry raised his hand in greeting.

“Do you have an omega here Mr Lecter?” Merry asked.

“I have a friend here, who is an omega yes.”

“Can we see them?”

Hannibal lowered himself to one of the chairs catty corner to the couch and sighed. “This is a very delicate situation. And not entirely ethical I’m afraid.”

Seeing Hannibal’s willingness to be honest and physically lowering himself to other Alphas in his home, Officer Raymond takes a seat on the couch, perching on the edge.

“Can you explain?”

“Will, the omega, came to me roughly 6 months ago. I’m a psychiatrist. And while Will isn’t my patient, to take in an unmated omega isn’t exactly ethical. There’s a big power difference,

Will is very vulnerable. His pup is here too."

Officer Merry scribbled notes in his notebook as Hannibal spoke. "Where is his Alpha?"

"Will doesn't have one."

"How did you meet him?"

Hannibal paused. "I would rather not say."

The two officers looked at one another. "Can I ask why?" Asked Merry.

Hannibal looked down, breaking eye contact. He needed to appear contrite, regretful, shameful. "I am a doctor, held in great esteem in my field. I would rather… not tarnish that reputation unless absolutely necessary."

Officer Raymond nodded. Hannibal hoped he presumed he found Will working the street or in a brothel. Not in the basement of a man he killed.

"Can I ask who told you about him being here?"

"I'm sorry Sir but I can't divulge that information." Merry replied.

"Of course. Will is asleep, would you like me to wake him?" Hannibal stood.

Raymond stood as well. "Yes, please Doctor Lecter."

“Before I do, I must let you know how skittish he is around strangers. I will assure him he’s not in any trouble, unless he is?”

“No, no trouble. We just need to see he’s ok.” Raymond stated.

Hannibal dipped his head and left the room. As he ascended the stairs he could hear the officers muttering to one another, too quietly to make out what they were saying.

He stopped at Will’s door and tapped gently on it. He heard a mumble from inside the room, sleepy and muted. He turned the handle slowly.

“Will, may I come in?” He cracked the door open a few inches and peaked in.

Will was in the middle of the bed, blankets piled on top of himself and Adam. Hannibal felt a smile forming on his lips as he took in the sight. Will had constructed a nest.

Somehow Will had managed to push the solid mahogany bed to the edge of the room. Blankets and pillows lined one edge, cushioning the bed and wall, more at the head and foot of the bed, it was neat and tidy. Adam was curled up in a small ball against the wall edge, a blanket tucked under his chin, his little fire engine toy in his hand.

The smile faded as Hannibal took in the man laying before him. Nothing had indicated that Will was scheming behind his back to escape. To leave. To call the police, cry wolf and get Hannibal arrested for omega trafficking, for keeping Will here against his will.

Hannibal walked softly into the room, his hand coming out automatically to touch Will’s hair. He looked warm and comfortable, his curly hair a mess on the pillow, creating a halo of browns and gold around his head. He stopped himself touching them barely an inch away and instead went to Will’s shoulder and gave it a little shake.

“I need to speak with you.” He said firmly.

Will grunted and shook Hannibal's hand from his shoulder. He slit his eyes open and frowned at Hannibal bent over him. "What time is it?"

Hannibal stepped back and said nothing. Will, still in his sleepy state didn't notice the snarl on Hannibal's mouth.

"Get up Will."

Will's eyes opened wide and snapped to Hannibal's. He carefully pushed himself up to a sitting position, his bare feet touching the cold wooden floor. He wiggled his toes in discomfort.

"Whats…" Will started.

"You need to come downstairs." Hannibal said sternly.

Will blinked then turned to look at Adam still sleeping soundly behind him.

"Leave the pup." Hannibal said.

"The pup…?" Will turned to Hannibal again, his brow falling in confusion. "You haven't called him that since…"

"Get. Up. Will." Hannibal snarled quietly.

Will took in a deep breath and rose from the bed, he looked down at Hannibal's feet as he did. Demure, innocent. The scent of Omegan distress started to fill Hannibal's nostrils.

“And you can stop that.” Hannibal said reaching for Will. He took his bicep, wrapping his hand roughly around the muscle, not quite painfully but firm enough for Will not to pull away.

“Whats going on?” Will whispered as Hannibal pulled him from the room.

Hannibal maneuvered Will into the hall outside the bedroom, pulled the door closed and pushed Will against the closed door with a gentle thud. He watched as Will’s breath picked up, his hands clenching into fists at his side. Hannibal stepped in close to Will’s body, pressing him harder against the wood.

“What have you done?” He whispered viciously. “What have you done?”

Will trembled against Hannibal, his breath coming out in stutters. “I… I don’t…”

“There are police in my house Will.”

Will’s head jerked to the side, looking at the top of the stairs. “Police?” He whispered back, his lip trembling.

“Someone told them you are here.”

“No… no no…” Will stuttered shaking his head. “Please…”

Hannibal let go of Will’s arm and stepped back, Will shook his head again and crumpled against the door, his hands coming up to cover his mouth.

“Get dressed and come downstairs.” Hannibal whispered.

Will looked at Hannibal, then to the stairs again and nodded, reaching behind himself to the door handle. He opened the door and stepped backwards into the room, closing the door.

Hannibal took a deep breath and smoothed his hands down the front of his robe, straightening out the tie around his waist. He looked at the closed door for a moment, listening to the sounds of Will pulling open a drawer, the sound of fabric dropping to the floor.

He let his breath out and went back downstairs to the lounge where the officers were waiting.

_____

As he entered the room he saw that Merry and Raymond were now looking around the room, Merry was standing in front of a bookshelf by the window, his head tilted to read the book spines. Raymond was by the drinks cabinet holding a bottle of Balvenie ‘Marriage 0197’, frowning at the label. The bottle was worth $38,000. He looked up at Hannibal as he entered the room and put the bottle back with a loud clink, Hannibal cringed at the sound.

“He’s getting dressed. I’ve informed him he’s not in any trouble, he is still distressed though. I’m afraid Will is rather fragile.”

Raymond made his way over to where Hannibal stood before the fireplace. “It was reported that he is injured. Can you tell me anything about that?”

Hannibal ducked his head again, playing at being remorseful.

“Will has been subject to an alarming amount of abuse in the time before I knew him.”

Merry took up his pen and notepad again from his pocket. “Abuse?”

“Maybe it would be best for him to tell you.”

All three Alphas looked to the door as Will padded his way into the room. He had dressed in his customary sweat pants and t-shirt. His hair hung over his forehead and was now long enough to touch low on the back of his neck.

His eyes darted to the men in the room before him, his stride faltering. He wrapped his arms around his middle, covering the slight bump there.

Merry audibly gasped as he took the sight of the omega. Raymond glared at his partner over his shoulder.

Hannibal saw Will scowl under his fringe and grip his own arms tighter.

“Will, this is Officer Raymond and Officer Merry.” Hannibal gestured to the men who had now moved closer to Will. Drawn in by the sight of a scarred, distressed omega before them.

The stopped themselves moving any closer as Will side stepped their advance, gingerly padding closer to Hannibal.

“Hello.” He whispered and rubbed the back of his neck.

Officer Raymond looked over to Hannibal and tilted his head, motioning for them to sit once again. Hannibal nodded and sat back into the chair he occupied before, Raymond took the sofa seat furthest from Hannibal, leaving a space for Will to sit.

Will hovered a moment, looking at his own feet. He silently took the remaining seat.

“Will, we’re here for a welfare check. Do you know what that is?” Asked Raymond.

Will shook his head.

“We’re here because someone called us. They’re worried about your well being. That you might be hurt.”

Will hunched further into himself, his shoulders curling forwards, his eyes closed tight.

Hannibal watches as the officers once again make eye contact, talking with just their expressions.

“Doctor Lecter, would you mind if we talk to Will alone please?” Raymond asks.

Hannibal takes a deep breath. He watches as Will’s eyes snap open, his gaze to the floor.

“If Will is comfortable with that, of course.”

Will’s head tilts in Hannibal’s direction, his eyes meeting Hannibal’s for a second then away again. He nods his head slightly, his curls barely moving.

Hannibal pauses then nods to the officers. He stands gracefully. “I’ll be in the kitchen if you need me Will.” His tone neutral.

“Thank you Doctor Lecter.” Merry says.

Hannibal calmly strides out of the room, through the hall and stops in the kitchen, his hands spread on the island, the cold marble soft under his palms. He stretches his back, arching his shoulders and waits.

In the lounge he can hear the deep tones of the alphas talking to Will, he can’t hear the words. He catches Will’s distinct gruff whisper answer their questions with short replies.

He straightens up but doesn't turn, he looks about the room. The clean sink, the shiny marble surfaces of the worktops, the pots and pans sat in neat size order stacked in the corner of the unit. The window is bright, letting in soft sun light. His half prepared breakfast still on the cutting board.

He takes another deep breath trying to let his anger pass through him, focuses on the air entering and exiting his lungs. Tries to think of how someone could have seen Will in their quiet, private garden.

Anything, anything other than Will calling for help himself. After all these months together. Will has had time. So much time allowed to wander the house to call the police. Maybe he was gathering evidence thinks Hannibal bitterly. Maybe he found a way to hide things in his room that will damn Hannibal to a life in jail, walled up in a cage to be poked and prodded by lesser psychiatrists. Or the death sentence.

Hannibal's anger rattles through his bones again and he shivers. Maybe someone came to the house while Hannibal was out and with his door unanswered, had looked through the window, seen Will inside. But that can't be it, Hannibal hasn't had any notifications on his phone app from the camera's outside of his home. Anyone who has come to his door has come and gone with nothing suspicious happening. So it must be the garden, or Will calling the police.

Hannibal takes a cup from the cupboard to his left and gets a drink of water to soothe the ache in his throat, his chest. That horrible, incessant tug behind his ribs whenever he thinks of Will has become almost painful. His spine tingling with the idea of Will's betrayal.

His mind races with what to do next. Should he kill Will? Than what of Adam? Hannibal's lungs push out the air he had just taken in at the thought of killing Adam. He could leave him somewhere. The boy is non verbal. He wouldn't be able to tall anyone his name or where he had been, what he had seen. Just another child lost to the system.

A lost boy, like Will had been, like he had been. Unclaimed, unwanted.

The glass clinks loudly on the counter, the tinny sound resonating in Hannibal's ears, echoing again and again in a crescendo until he hears from the lounge the sound of Will shouting 'No!'

Hannibal turns then and strides into the lounge, his instinct to protect burning under his skin.

Will is now standing, his hands at his sides, fists clenched, his cheeks pink with frustration. The scent coming from Will's trembling frame is of burnt sugar, cinnamon, fear and anger.

Hannibal clears his throat. "Is everything ok?" He looks to the officers then back to Will.

Raymond sighs then stands, puts the notebook he held back into his top pocket. "I apologize Will, we didn't mean to upset you, we just… have to make sure."

Will brings his arms up to hug himself again, gripping his own biceps and walks out of the room without a glance over his shoulder. Hannibal can hear him filling the glass he left on the counter with water.

"Doctor Lecter, as far as we're concerned everything here is… unconventional but not illegal."

Hannibal nods congenially "I'm glad you think so."

Raymond nods again and motions for his partner to join him as they walk back to the front door.

Hannibal steps up beside them and puts his hand on the latch to open the door when Officer Merry's hand comes out and holds it closed. Hannibal looks to him with his eyebrows raised.

"He said you found him."

“Yes?”

“Where?” Merry narrows his eyes slightly, suspicion threaded through his features.

Hannibal doesn’t falter, he can’t now, not for a second. Any pause in his answer will make him look like he’s lying. He desperately hopes that Will has given the officers a story as close to the truth as possible.

“He was living with a mechanic. I went to get my car repaired.”

Both officers straighten, their shoulders pulled back a little. Silence hangs in the air as they both internally evaluate his answer. Hannibal blinks.

“Thank you for your time Doctor Lecter, we hope you’re able to support Will with his… recovery.” Raymond says.

Hannibal opens the door for them, they leave one at a time, nodding their goodbyes and stroll down the path, Merry looks back once over his shoulder and Hannibal holds his hand up and gives a stiff wave. The officer doesn’t return it.

He waits until they’re climbing back into their car to shut the door. He leans against the cool wood, the chill seeping through the thin layer of silk pajamas and robe. Tilting his head back, letting it thunk gently on the door, his eyes fall to the kitchen entrance. It’s silent inside but he knows Will is still in there.

He holds himself upright and strides with purposeful steps to the kitchen doorway. Will is standing by the sink, one hand behind his back, the other clenched in a fist by his side.

Before Hannibal can speak Will opens his mouth.

“Did you do this to scare me?” He whispers.

Hannibal doesn’t move.

“Well? Did you do this so I would stay quiet? Keep your secrets so you keep mine?” He says louder, his brow furrowing, the corners of his mouth turned down.

Will is trembling, a fine shiver raking his whole body. Hannibal doesn’t answer.

“You’re not the only one who has killed Hannibal. You’re not alone with blood on your hands.”

Hannibal tilts his head up, his chin lifting, indignant. “I did not call them Will.”

Blue eyes meet his and hold, searching, always searching for the possible lies behind Hannibal’s teeth. Will’s eyelashes flutter and he drops his gaze.

Quicker than Will can counter Hannibal darts around the kitchen island, his feet silent on the stone floor and pins Will against the sink, pushing him back, his spine bending. Hannibal grips his by the throat, not squeezing, just adding pressure.

From the corner of his eye he sees Will’s shoulder shift minutely and then feels the sharp edge of a knife pressed against his throat. Not cutting, just held there so he can feel its keen edge.

Hannibal smiles. Will grimaces back.

Who called

Chapter Notes

Hello Gorgeous,
Sorry... left you on a bit of a tense bit last time. It was a good place to stop though.
I wrote this chapter for you to make up for it cos I love you.
Winston x x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal lowered his hand first, stroking the delicate skin of Will's neck as he did so, running the tips of his fingers from behind Will's ear to the collar of his t-shirt.

A shudder ran through Will, he kept the knife to Hannibal's throat. Not pressing in, just holding it there, a threat.

"Stop smiling." Will ground out behind clenched teeth.

Hannibal smiled even wider, the corners of his eyes creasing in genuine pleasure.

"I did not call them Will."

"I didn't either!" Will snapped. He twitched then grimaced again. "Can you… my back."

Hannibal took a scenting breath in, through parted teeth and over his soft palate then relented and stepped back to allow Will to straighten up, which he did with a sigh. Hannibal watched him reach to the side and drop the knife in the sink and rub his hip with his left hand.

With barely a foot between them Hannibal could smell Will's frustration, his fear, his confusion. It had notes of wooden embers, crisp cut grass and a sour undertone of burnt skin. It was unpleasant.

“What did you tell them?” Hannibal asked, his posture forcibly relaxed, hands limp at his sides.

Will glanced up, then rubbed the back of his neck. “Mostly the truth.” He shrugged lopsidedly and moved to the side to lean against the island. “Told them you saw me at the garage. Knew I needed help. Offered it.”

Hannibal nods minutely, a subtle gesture for Will to continue.

Will huffs and rolls his eyes. “I didn’t tell them you killed him. Didn’t mention the basement. Being locked up in here.” His eyes sweep the room dismissively. “Didn’t tell them about you.”

Hannibal tilts his head like a cat. “I’m glad to hear it.”

Will stops fidgeting. “Who called them Hannibal?” He whispers, his eyes catching Hannibal’s.

Hannibal holds the eye contact, falling into those cerulean blue pools, lined with gold, for just a moment before pulling himself away. He turns his back to Will and begins to wash his hands and finish the task of making breakfast. He dries his hands on a towel and moves to join Will by the island and takes a new knife from the block.

“Would you dice this please?” He holds the knife out to Will handle first, the blade loose in his palm.

Will’s eyebrows fall in a frown as he takes the knife. Hannibal slides the chopping board up the unit in front of him. A ripe heritage tomato sits perfectly in the middle.

“Take off the stem and discard the seeds.” Hannibal instructs and he walks across the room to the fridge to gather more ingredients.

Will pauses for a moment before he washes his own hands then does as he’s asked. Theres a slight tremble to his hands as he works Hannibal notices.

By the time the omelet with sliced sausage is ready (no meat for Adam), Adam has roused himself and come to find his mother. He sits at the island counter running his toy car up and down the length of it, as far as his arm stretches.

Hannibal plates their meal and carries all three plates to the dining room. He places them down on the table then returns to the kitchen to retrieve cutlery and coffee for Will and himself, a glass of apple juice for Adam.

In the dining room Omega and pup have taken their seats.

In the den, once the breakfast items have been cleaned and cleared away, Will and Adam sit on the sofa, the television is playing a space documentary that seems to engross the pup, enough that he sits at Will’s feet so Will can drag a comb through his unruly curls without the boy fussing too much.

Hannibal sits on a chair with his iPad scrolling through news articles, sipping his second coffee. Nothing catches his attention, or it would if he wasn’t running this morning’s events through his mind again and again trying to dissect every minute detail.

From what he can tell Will wasn’t lying about what he had told the police. He’s not sure what prompted him to shout at the officers, Will will either tell him or he won’t.

They seemed satisfied with Hannibal's responses and talk with Will. It's possible they might return when Hannibal isn't home to question the omega without him around, maybe to gather more information if they suspect either of them wasn't telling the whole truth. Only time will tell if they are to return.

The only question that Hannibal can mull over now is who called them in the first place. His first thought had been Will himself which Will had denied. His scent and anger had proved to Hannibal that he was telling the truth. His second thought was a passer by or neighbor but unless Will alerted them to his presence then that also couldn't be the answer.

Mason's name floated around the dark corners of Hannibal's mind like a cockroach hiding in the dim light but Hannibal presumed if he knew about Will then he would come for him himself. Mason wasn't one to shy away from intent. He was brash and demanding. Hannibal felt that Mason would tell Hannibal his intentions outright. Mason was selfish. But he had sold Will after killing their daughter. Will had told him that Mason had said he was useless. Unable to produce a male heir and therefore discarded like trash. A spike of anger in Hannibal's scent made Will slow his gentle tugging of Adam's curls and look up at Hannibal across the room.

"Does… does anyone know… you're friends I mean… do they know I'm here?" Will asked half whispered in his gruff tone. "They must smell me on you…"

Hannibal placed his iPad on the table beside himself and held the mug of coffee in both hands.

"I have explained the scent on my clothes as that of a patient." Hannibal replied, his head tipped back, chin firm.

Will looked back to his task with a small smirk on his face. It gave him an uneven plumpness to his cheeks.

"They believe you?"

"Yes." Hannibal answers simply.

Will huffed out an aborted laugh. “What a clever veil you’ve pulled over their eyes.”

“They see what I want them too.” Hannibal said with an air of pride. Alpha preening coming to the surface.

“They must be blind if they cant see what lurks under your skin, Hannibal.” Will groused and dropped the comb onto the seat beside himself to run his fingers through Adam’s hair instead, the pup making a happy chirp, resettling himself between Will’s feet to lean back, his head resting on Will’s leg.

“Then they are blind.” Hannibal takes a sip of his coffee, realizing it’s gone cold and puts the mug beside the iPad on the table. “I thought maybe it was Mason.”

Will stills his affectionate ministrations and slumps back into his seat, his shoulders sagging, scent souring again. He squeezes his eyes shut, a frown playing on his lips. “I don’t… I don’t think he’d be so subtle.”

“My thoughts too.” Hannibal agrees. “Although he might have changed since the time you were in his clutches.”

“Mason doesn’t change.” Will’s jaw tightens. “He won’t.”

“No.” Hannibal sighs. “He is a creature of habit.”

“We’re all creatures of habit. His habits are…” Will trails off. His hand comes to his stomach to rest over his small bump. His thumb stroking lines down his t-shirt.

Hannibal’s next words are cut off by the shrill sound of his cell phone ringing within his pocket. Hannibal retrieves it and frowns at Jack’s name appearing on the dim screen.

He swipes his finger over the green answer button and puts the phone to his ear. “Jack.” He greets.

“Doctor Lecter, there’s been another one.”

_____

The body has already been removed from its ropes by time Hannibal makes it across Baltimore. This time there is no crowd of bystanders, no reporters. The crime scene is deep in a wooded area, off the beaten track by a small river. The calm rolling water, lush green trees, birds singing happily high above their heads is a stark contrast to the body now laying on a stretcher, blood stained wrapping taunt around the figure within.

Hannibal exits his car and see’s Jack marching towards him, the alpha frowning, his eyes stern, shoulders high and square.

“Thank you for coming Doctor Lecter.” He extends his hand and Hannibal takes it, giving it a brief but firm shake.

“He’s escalating.” Hannibal says as they walk back through the trees to the scene, stepping over logs and bramble.

“Or she.” Jack replies grimly. “We still haven’t ruled out Melissa Brownlie.”

“She would need help Jack, there’s no way she could carry a body this far from the road. I see no wheel tracks. This body was carried.”

They stop before the murder tree, the ropes still hanging from it. They sway in the breeze, looking like pretty ribbons on the tree’s limbs. The decorations of the Midsommer Festival from Hannibal’s youth flit before his eyes, the beat of skin drums rumble in his ears for a

moment, a small hand in his pulling him towards a bonfire, he can feel the heat touch his cheek before he comes back to the hollow grizzly scene in front of him.

He shakes the memory from his shoulders has he straightens up and walks around the tree to find Beverly, her hands on her hips, head tipped back to look up at the tree.

“Miss Katz.” Hannibal greets her.

“Hey Hannibal” she says politely. Her tone is light but her posture is tight and stressed.

“Anything useful?” He asks although he knows the answer.

She shakes her head and huffs. “Nope.” She lets the p pop between her lips. “Fat lot of good it would do, we had a finger print that gave us nothing last time.”

“It is all very disappointing.” Hannibal joins her to look up at the tree. He sees her give him a sideways glance, her eyes narrowing.

“Theres no need for that Doc.” She smiles. “I have a pretty good therapist already.”

Hannibal turns and smiles back. “I’m glad. Although I do hope you mean an actual therapist and not a collection of whiskey bottles.”

Beverly snorts, smiles and shakes her head. “No I mean a person. Although I hate to admit this case has me reaching for the bottle more often than usual.”

Jack calls to them both a little ways from the tree. The body already loaded into an ambulance to be taken to the BAU.

“Doctor Lecter, can you join us at the lab?” Jack asks, his tone brooking no argument. He’s not asking, he’s just being polite.

“Of course.” Hannibal allows. He nods his goodbye to Jack and Beverly then returns to his car. He leaves the team to gather the rest of the evidence, the scene will be bagged and tagged by FBI underlings. From the drivers seat he watches as Beverly and Jack climb into an SUV and join the ambulance as it slowly crosses the open field beside the forest, back towards the road. He starts the car and joins in the parade.

_____

It’s just Jack, Beverly and Zeller in the lab. Price having stayed at the scene to dust for prints, although he did huff at being the one left behind Zeller tells Hannibal.

The body is placed on the metal surgery table. Beverly dons gloves and fabric shears and cuts down the line of the body, toes to head, revealing the battered and broken skin of the dead omega beneath.

Peeling back the sharp edges of the cut cloth more injuries are seen. Eyes removed, genitals mutilated, stomach opened.

Inside the cavity, low in the omegas hips lays the body of a pup, very close to their birth date it would seem, maybe a few weeks from it.

Jack covers his mouth and growls. Zeller slips by them all to the hall beyond the metal swinging doors of the lab. Hannibal can hear him gagging outside the door, muffed sobs escaping his lips.

Beverly goes entirely still, her eyes low, her mouth a pensive line, lips pinched together.

Hannibal, a trained trauma surgeon, head of the department, who has seen his fair share of brutal injuries to all ages and genders, turns his back. He cant seem to stop himself. His body

acts of its own accord and he swings on his heel so his back is to the table, dead pup and omega laying upon it.

Silence fills the room. Eventually Zeller returns but says nothing. He calmly pics up the camera he had discarded on the table on his way out of the room and resumes taking photos.

The victim is male, roughly 30 years old. Brunette. Clipped brown curls, matted with blood, stick to his forehead and cheeks. Dried blood covers his face, pieces of flesh from having his eyes bludgeoned sit on his pretty cheeks and lips. He's slender, lithe muscles sit beneath his pale skin.

Hannibal cant blink away the image as much as he tries. This man looks alarmingly like Will. His hands, his muscular thighs, the arch of his feet.

The room is filled with the scent of anger from the Alphas, anger and disgust. Its bitter. Like burnt coffee and soured whiskey. The scent burns the back of Hannibal's eyes and nose. It seeps into his skin as though a smoke bomb has exploded in the room.

From behind him he can hear Beverly quietly describe the injuries on the body and the snap of Zeller's camera. Jack is silent.

Hannibal takes a breath in through his nose and lets it out through his mouth. Another. And another. He finally turns back to face the room. Jack is standing to the edge of the examination area, his arms folded across his chest, his brow furrowed in a deep frown. Zeller has the look of man who has reached his emotional limit and shut down. Beverly is being a professional, of course, making notes of everything.

"He's escalating, he knows we're close." Hannibal says calmly.

Jack grunts in affirmation. "We need to warn people."

"I agree. But warn them against who?"

Jack squares his shoulders and puffs his chest out. “Everyone.” He says and marches out of the lab, the doors swinging shut behind him. They listen to his stomping footsteps fade into silence, catching each others eye.

“This is…” Beverly starts, gesturing to the body on the table. “I can’t even begin.”

Zeller pinches the bridge of his nose shaking his head. “This is more than hate. This is more than being jealous.”

“Yes it certainly seems that way.” Hannibal nods once. “ A true mark of vengeance possibly? Revenge in the most destructive way.”

“Could he be a jilted lover? An alpha who’s been rejected too many times and now thinks he can destroy other Alpha’s lives by taking away their omega?” Beverly posits.

Hannibal doesn’t answer, he slowly moves around the table, his head tilted in concentration. These omegas aren’t what the killer is looking for.

“He’s looking for a replacement for an omega he has lost perhaps. Taken from him or having left him. He’s trying to fill the space their absence has created. But these omega’s dont want him.” Hannibal says thinking out loud.

“He keeps them for a time, until they argue or do something the original wouldn’t do. Then he discards them and looks for another.” Beverly joins in.

“But why the wrapping?” Zeller pipes up, his intelligent blue eyes sweeping up the length of the omegas pale body.

“A chance for a new life. Let them become butterflies and live on.” Hannibal answers, his brow furrowing a little. “He removes the eyes because they’re not what he wants to look

upon him. Never quite the right color.”

“And the genitals?” Beverly asks.

“Because they’re inconsequential. Male or female, an omega is what’s important here.” Hannibal says and straightens up again, stretching his shoulders back.

“This is one crazy motherfu-“

“Zeller!” Jack shouts as he barges back into the lab, his jacket flapping around his hips as he stomps towards them. “I need everything you’ve got on this case. Every detail, all the interviews, everything.”

Zeller nods and disappears into a room off the examination area. Beverly takes her cue and goes to her desk, sits at her computer and starts compiling the evidence she has.

After a few hours of helping make notes on their profile, Hannibal sees himself out. Jack giving him an appreciative nod, thanking him for his time.

———————-

He enters his home quietly, the hour now late. The house isn’t dark, the light in the kitchen is on, he notes with a small smile, Will doesn’t want to be jumped again while searching for a snack in the dark.

He removes his shoes and coat, places his keys in the bowl on the sideboard. As he walks down the hall to the den he can hear the muffled sounds of the news on the television. The door is open slightly for Will to hear if Adam calls him from their room. Hannibal enters the room quietly but not too quietly, he doesn’t move around the house as silently as he once did. Will prone to anger when he is surprised. Well, fear then anger.

Hannibal walks to the liquor cabinet in the corner of the room and pours himself a whiskey. He then sits with a sigh in his normal chair, Will having chosen the sofa as his favorite seat.

Will glances at Hannibal briefly. “Rough one huh?”

Hannibal takes a long sip of his drink then nods slowly. “He’s escalating.”

Will hums and nods in understanding. Hannibal knows he doesn’t want the gory details, he’s seen enough of the news coverage to glean a decent understanding of Hannibal’s meaning.

They sit in silence for a while, letting the news presenters talk about the Omega Killer, as he’s officially been monikered now, their wild theories and viewer comments, tweets and the such. A woman presenter with a harsh bleach blonde bob and too many teeth has been rattling on about a viewers theory for five minutes and Hannibal watches Will stifle a yawn, the tendons in his neck going tense.

Hannibal is about to tell him to go to bed when hears the words ‘The Chesapeake Ripper’ come over the speakers. His eyes snap to the screen.

“Well Jerry that’s an interesting idea, don’t you think?” The woman presenter turns to her co host. A ken doll of a man with too much hair spray in his coifed hair.

“It’s certainly a possibility they could be one and the same, tired of the old routine Jeanette” He has the audacity to laugh.

Hannibal can feel the hairs on the back of his neck stand up. How dare they compare his work and even say that he was capable of such barbaric acts of cruelty, displayed in horrific grotesque ways. He’s nothing like the Omega Killer, he’s an artist. He elevates pigs into something they could never have achieved in their pitiful lives. He’s…

His eyes turn away from the screen to Will who is frowning at the screen, his brow low on his forehead, head tilted.

“That’s ridiculous.” Will states. His voice low and quiet.

Hannibal sucks in a breath. “How so?” Hannibal asks and tries to cover his sincere curiosity with a sip of his drink, letting the whiskey flow over his tongue but not tasting it.

Will looks at him, his eyes full of uncertainty, they flicker around the room, then land back on Hannibal’s tie. “Well… I…”

Hannibal raises his eyebrows, the motion only just visible given how pale are. “You don’t agree they could be the same killer?”

Will opens his mouth then closes it again. He shakes his head.

“How is the Omega Killer different to The Chesapeake Ripper?” Hannibal asks always willing to hear himself spoken about in the third person, his ego stroked in one way or another.

“The erm.. The Omega Killer…” Will grimaced at the name. “He’s cruel. He hates the omegas he kills and mutilates. The news said he hurts them when theyr’e alive, takes their eyes?”

Will looks to Hannibal then for confirmation which he gives in a subtle nod.

Will’s head bobs up and down, mirroring Hannibal’s own movement. “He hates them. Hates what they are. He sees their life, their family. And he’s jealous.”

Hannibal leans forward, his elbows braced on his knees. Will doesn’t notice the shift in his position, Hannibal can see his eyes have taken on a far away look, not really seeing the room anymore. It’s fascinating.

“He doesn’t kill the Alpha, he takes the omega, possibly to convince them of something, which they inevitably deny him. Which is why he kills them. He wants what they have but the news… they got it all wrong. He doesn’t kill the omega because he wants them to be his…”

Hannibal realises he’s holding his breath, Will looks mesmerizing, his curls glow in the firelight, his brow is smooth, his eyes fallen shut. Hannibal’s eyes travel the length of Will’s body, he’s loose limbed, his hands resting on his knees, at ease. Will is creating a killer’s profile from just watching news articles. It’s captivating. Will is conjuring the mind of a killer, a broken, scarred, untrained man, lifting the veil to a killer’s mind with only his own heart telling him how.

“He’s not trying to convince the omega to go with him. He’s… he’s trying to replace them. He’s an Omega.”

Chapter End Notes

I wish when I'd started writing this I had thought more about the chapter titles and been cooler about it.
Like naming them after food like in Hannibal or song lyrics etc.
Or just leaving them as numbers... I dunno.
Instead I get to the part where I have to name them and and I'm like OH NO I DONT KNOW IM NOT COOL ENOUGH.

So if someone wants to rename my chapters for me and let me know your suggestions? that would be ok. And helpful.
Fanks!
W x

Press Conference

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“He’s an Omega.” Hannibal stated to the shocked face of Jack Crawford.

“An Omega?” Jack asked, his eyebrows raised, his chin lifted. “Doctor Lecter… these murders, they’re very un-omega like.”

Hannibal wanted to scoff. And laugh. How very Alphan of Jack. How very alphan of himself truth be told.

5 months ago, before he met Will Graham, he might have said the same thing. That omega’s weren’t capable of violence so extreme that they can take the life of another human being. And he would have been so very very wrong. Will was testament to this. He was furious and vicious. Will was capable of so much more than he thought possible.

“Jack look at the evidence. He’s not killing the Alphas to take the omega for himself. He’s taking the omega, to convince them to leave, to give him their happiness, their family. He wants to replace them.”

Jack sat back in his chair with a sigh. Hannibal could see his mind working over the clues, the statements given by their alpha partners, they were all happy, settled, loved.

“Why the eyes?” Jack asked.

“I think” Hannibal replied, “he takes the eyes because they cannot see how much their life is worth to someone who doesn’t have it.”

Jack slowly nods, his brow furrowed. “The genitals because it doesn’t matter what gender they are, they’re omegan.”

Hannibal gives Jack a short nod. “Yes.”

Jack blows out a puff of breath and grips the arms of his chair. “Jesus, this is gonna cause an uproar.”

“When is the press conference?”

“2pm.” Jack stands abruptly. He moves around his desk and opens a file cabinet drawer. He pulls out a bottle of scotch tucked behind some files. On his way back across the room he grabs two water glasses and put them down, opens the bottle and pour himself a good two fingers worth, then holds the bottle up in a silent gesture to Hannibal, who declines.

That the head of The Behavioral Science Unit of the FBI feels the need for a stiff drink at 9am tells Hannibal that this information is not going to over well. There will be heavy questioning from reporters.

“I’ve come across a feisty omega or two in my life.” Jack says as he takes his chair again. “But nothing like this.”

“It is fairly uncommon. But we all know Omegas are fiercely protective of their pups. They are just as capable of violence as the rest of us, he is after all, still a man.”

Jack opens his mouth as though to protest, then closes it again. He looks like a fish out of water, bobbing on dry land. Hannibal supposes he feels that way too. His societal beliefs thrown into disarray. Hannibal can almost see the statistics floating behind Jack’s eyes. Violence against omegas, violence against women. Violence perpetrated by men.

“This is going to cause a ruckus. Would it be to inconvenient to ask you to be there at the press conference?” Jack narrows his eyes, he doesn’t look hopeful, he looks determined.

Hannibal takes a deep breath. How exciting. To have himself on record forever, as a consultant for the FBI, lending his exquisite mind in aid of catching a fellow serial killer. The Chesapeake Ripper holding hands with Special Agent Jack Crawford in front of all of America. Metaphorically of course.

“I will need some time to prepare.” Hannibal says trying to hide the smirk he can feel perched at the corner of his mouth.

Jacks shoulders drop minutely in relief. “Of course, of course.”

_____-

Hannibal sits in a quiet area of the pathology lab in the basement of Quantico. He has been given a laptop as he didn’t bring his with him and it would be a waste of his time to drive to his office and back again. His fingers move over the keyboard at speed.

He’s careful not to log into any of his personal accounts, email accounts etc. Knowing the FBI there is more than likely a keystroke or spyware app on the damned thing that would then give them access to his entire life.

He doesn’t use any search engines, his eidetic memory aiding him with online resources and journals. He believes his credentials should be enough to back up his theory on the Omega Killer but just in case he compiles a detailed profile, using profiles of other killers and their motives to support his own claim.

He doesn’t turn but is aware of Beverly sauntering up to him to read over his shoulder. He allows it for a moment.

“May I help you Miss Katz?” He asks still typing.

“I brought you some coffee.”

He stops typing and slowly swivels the chair around and eyes the cup on her hand.

“Don’t worry, I stole it from Jacks office.” She smirks, her hand resting on her hip. She holds of the cup.

“Thank you.” He takes the cup and sips on the liquid. It’s ok but not great. He drinks some anyway.

“It’s a hell of a theory.” She states looking at the screen behind him. She steps forward then and perches on the edge of the table by the laptop. “But I totally believe it.”

Hannibal swivels his chair again, now feeling slightly ridiculous having almost turned full circle, back to face the table. “That’s good to know.”

Beverly waves her hand in a placating gesture. “I’m being sincere Doc, I was with my wife while she gave birth, almost broke my hand. And I thank god I took dodgeball seriously in high school, I ducked quite a few things thrown at me.”

Hannibal smiles good naturedly, genuine. Beverly is a competent, attentive alpha. “Your wife is lucky to have you.”

Beverly’s face sobers up a little, her smile dropping slightly. “I’m lucky to have her.”

They share a smile before Zeller breaks the moment by coming up behind Hannibal and clapping him on the shoulder.

“Hey Doc!”

Beverly hides her grin, dropping her chin to her chest and hops off the table.

“Mr Zeller.”

Hannibal’s voice is obviously stern enough that Zeller’s lopsided smile falls and he looks at his shoes like a child told off by a teacher.

“Ah, yeah, sorry Doc, it’s just good to see you.”

“Thank you.”

Beverly lets out a little giggle as she walks back to the main part of the lab, Zeller following her whispering. “We spent time together, I thought it was cool.” He barely catches Beverly reply ‘Dumbass’ as they walk further away.

Hannibal sips his coffee and focuses back on the laptop, a small smile on his lips. He enjoyed his time with Zeller too, but god forbid the man knows about it.

———————-

The press conference goes as expected. When Jack says they suspect an Omega is the Omega Killer the room erupts, cameras flash, reporters shout for Jack’s attention holding up their recorders to catch every word he says.

Hannibal watches from the edge of the platform, no one taking any real notice of him. That is until Jack calls him up onto the stage to speak his piece.

For two hours before the conference Jack and the team, Hannibal included, had sat in a board room rehearsing what they would say if asked any questions. The do and dont's of what to say in such a public forum. Jack had impressed heavily that they were not to mention any details about how any of the bodies had been mutilated. The phone lines would light up with sycophants trying to confess to being the killer.

Hannibal had of course paid attention, asking relevant questions and deferring to Jacks's authority.

He hears Jack say his name and takes his place in front of what appears to be 20 microphones.

_____

He's missed dinner by the time he makes it home. The house smells of spices and meat. The underlying scent of steamed broccoli.

Hannibal takes off his coat and shoes and goes to the kitchen with the intention of making himself something small to eat when he see's on the counter a Tupperware box with a note on top. He lifts off the post it note and reads:

Hannibal, I made gumbo. Please help yourself. Will.

Will's handwriting is firm and simple. The letters have small gaps in-between. The paper has impressions on it from the sheaf before it, more of Will's writing shows, notes written and discarded until he said what he wanted.

He runs the pad of his finger over the indentations of each letter, tracing the thick lines. He cant remember the last time someone wrote him a note and left it on a gift. He cant remember the last time he was given a gift. And this is a gift.

While Hannibal had always turned down Will's offer to cook for him, he explained that cooking was a sort of therapy for him, a way to wind down the day. Will had taken it with the underlying truth that Hannibal believed Will could not cook to his standard. Will told him he could follow a fancy recipe, that he could work it out.

But Hannibal didn't want Will to cook for him, he didn't want him to feel like he had to fulfill traditional omegan roles.

He lifted the lid of the Tupperware and was overcome with the scent of delicious spices, heat and warmth filled his nose, the sharpness of garlic, onions, parsley. Hannibal could see the sausages he had made at the weekend stirred into the mix, prawns from his freezer, chicken he bought for Adam. He was rich and creamy and looked absolutely delicious.

He took a bowl from a cupboard and spooned out a serving and popped it into the microwave to warm up. The only reason Hannibal owned a microwave. The timer went off and Hannibal took his meal, along with a glass of Sauvignon Blanc and went to the dining room to eat, a small smile on his face.

Flavors exploded on his tongue, his taste buds tingly after every mouthful and the meal was finished faster than Hannibal would admit, his normal delicate bites replaced with spoonfuls of delicious gumbo, not quite shoveled into his mouth but close enough.

He cleaned his dish, putting in the rack to dry and put the left over gumbo in the fridge.

He found Will and Adam in the den, a documentary about space on the television, possibly the same documentary, if Hannibal was to guess, that Adam had insisted on every day this week.

Will looked up as he sat in his normal chair, his wine in his hand. He looked apprehensive, his eyes not meeting Hannibal's, stopping at his tie.

"Hello Will."

“Hi, did you… did you see the gumbo?”

Hannibal could see the blush start high on Will’s cheeks, it was rather fetching. His hands shook as he petted Adam’s hair, the pup at his feet, eyes glued to the screen.

“It was delicious Will. Thank you.”

Will ducked his head, his blush darkening. “You’re welcome.” He whispered, his voice gruff.

“Is it a family recipe?”

Hannibal watched as Will looked uncomfortable for a moment, debating what to tell him. Hannibal chuckled. “A secret family recipe?”

Will let out a small laugh. “My Mawmaw always said she’d put a gris gris on anyone who shares her gumbo recipe.” His eyes twinkling.

Hannibal tilts his head at Will’s southern accent threading into his speech. Will had told him he was from Louisiana, but moved a lot as a child, his father working boat docks, hiding Will away as much as he could. Over time, and possibly through coercion, Will had lost his southern twang, his accent settling into a midwest sound.

Will looks up and laughs a little louder. “My grandmother said she’d curse anyone who shared the recipe. She shared it with me though. Only thing I remember about her.”

“Thank you for sharing her food with me.” Hannibal says and Will’s blush returns full force, the tips of his ears a lovely shade of pink.

Hannibal relents his teasing and changes the subject. Sparing Will his embarrassment.

“I shared your incites with Jack Crawford.”

Will’s head rises. “Yeah I saw.”

Hannibal’s brow comes down then raises when he realizes. “Ah, you saw the conference?”

Will nods. “Yeah it interrupted someones space documentary, right before we got to the moons of Mars…”

“Oh dear.” Hannibal looks to Adam on the floor, the pup still engrossed in the television.

“Had to give him two tangerines to calm him down, he stopped fussing when you came on the screen.” Will huffs a laugh.

“He recognized me?” Hannibal whispers. His voice quiet.

“Yeah, stood up and tried to touch the screen”

He sees the moment Will realizes what it means. That Adam can not only recognize Hannibal on the television, he can also indicate, without words, that he knows its Hannibal. He’s confused when Will looks up at him, face stricken.

“Shit.” Will grunts. He shakes his head and slumps back into his seat. “Shit.”

“Language.”

Will's head snaps to Hannibal, his eyes narrowed. "Really? You're gonna 'language' me? Well I'm sorry but I've just realized he can identify you and what that means, he knows you… he's never…"

He watches as Will starts to shake, his hands have stopped stroking Adam's hair. He's clenched his fist on his thighs, his knuckles turning white.

"Before… before there was a chance Hannibal." Will says weakly, tears gathering at his lashes.

"Will." Hannibal breathes. His tone firm but not unkind. Hannibal stands and gestures for Will to follow him as he calmly leaves the room. In the kitchen he waits by the island, his hands on the cool surface.

In the den he can hear Adam begin to hum, his monotone sound reaching a high pitch then falling silent.

Will pads into the kitchen a moment later, his eyes are wide, his lashes damp. Hannibal can see he hasn't let the tears run down his cheeks, his skin dry. He shaking as he stands opposite Hannibal, placing his hands on the counter mirroring Hannibal's stance.

"I know…" Will starts. "I know I can't leave Hannibal. I know I'm stuck here."

"You're not a prisoner Will."

Will looks up and meets Hannibal's eyes, his glare is full of anger, sharp as a knifes edge.

"Of course I am! And… and I accept that. But after the police…" He sighs. "After the police, with everything we know about each other. I had hoped…" He drops his head, his shoulders begin to curl in.

Hannibal watches as Will wraps his arms around himself, he's retreating Hannibal thinks.

"There might have been a chance, in the future. Adam could…" Will trails off, his lip trembling.

Hannibal pauses, waiting for Will to finish. When he doesn't say anything else Hannibal takes a deep breath. "Will, Adam is autistic, he's non verbal."

He see's Will's brow fall, his mouth curl into a grimace. "He might learn."

"There is a chance that Adam may learn to communicate verbally, but I must insist that there is a very big chance that Adam will need your care for the rest of his life. As much as he needs it now."

Will sniffs, holding back his sadness.

"Will, Adam being able to identify me, it's not…" Hannibal stops, for once struggling to find the words in English to express what he means. "I am not unhappy that Adam recognized me. I actually found it… pleasing."

"Oh." Will's tears now begin to fall, he hangs his head, his curls falling into his eyes. His shoulders shake as the man begins to break down.

Hannibal watches from behind the counter, that tug is back in his stomach, behind his ribs, he feels it swoop down low in his belly making him feel heavy inside. Before he can stop himself his feet begin to take him around to Will's side of the unit.

He doesn't realize his hand is shaking as he reaches for Will's shoulder, he feels the man stiffen under his fingers as he pushes his hand over the slender bones, round to the back of Will's shoulders. His own breath catching as he pulls Will into an embrace.

Wrapping his arms around the smaller man he can feel Will begin to relax, his face pressed into Hannibal's chest, his tears dampening his shirt. Slowly, so very slowly he can feel Will's arms loosen from his grip on his own arms to curl around Hannibal's waist, his hands spreading over the muscles of Hannibal's back, his fingers clutching onto the fabric so tightly.

This is nothing like that embrace so many months ago when Hannibal had lost himself in the kill and come home dripping in blood, the anger at himself for bringing Will and Adam into his home and being so easily seen by Will, insulted at his own dinner table. That night had been animalistic, and Will had calmed the alpha with his gentle words and warm body.

No, this was something else, this was something Hannibal couldn't name. He felt pain when the pain wasn't his, his own heart heavy with the weight of Will's sorrow.

Hannibal's lizard brain supplied the word *mate* and Hannibal's fingers tightened that little bit more.

They stood there in the kitchen, letting Will cry until he become calm. Eventually Will made a quiet sound of discomfort and Hannibal let him go, taking a step back, giving Will some space.

"Sorry, hormones." Will lets out a breathless laugh, there's no real joy to it tho.

"It's quite alright Will." Hannibal says, his hand coming up to stroke Will's arm. He realizes how much he wants to pet the omega in front of him, touch his skin, feel his curls through his fingers. Now his mind has supplied a word he never would have associated with anyone, never sought out in any way, it keeps running on a loop through his brain over and over as he looks at the thin, scarred, brave Omega before him.

Mate mate mate

Will looks up at the affectionate gesture of Hannibal running his hand down his arm, his eyes catching Hannibal's and staying. His focus is like a thrum of lightening through Hannibal's fingertips as he reaches Will's forearm, bare skin touching bare skin.

Will's eyes flutter, his pupils dilate, black bleeding into blue, blue bleeding into the beautiful ring of gold that is wider now.

"Oh." Will whispers and Hannibal watches as the tip of his pink tongue peaks out of his mouth to moisten his bottom lip. Hannibal had never noticed before how pretty Will's mouth is, his lips soft, his cupids bow gently curved. Will's face is damp, his tears drying on his cheeks, he looks flushed and plump. His eyes drop to Hannibal's own mouth as he mirrors Will's action and licks his own bottom lip, they flicker back up to his eyes again.

The air around them suddenly feels very thin, Hannibal parts his mouth to take in a deeper breath, he steps closer to Will as his does, his socked toes touching Will's bare ones.

So close now its like they're sharing each others breath, Hannibal tilts his head forward, his nose brushing Will's, Will's eyes never leaving his.

Hannibal's phone lets out a loud shrill ring and Will jumps, his body practically leaving the ground and he takes a step back, Hannibal's hand falling from his wrist.

"Sūdas!" Hannibal mutters, his head dropping. He hears Will let out a nervous laugh and looks up to the man smiling, genuinely smiling, his eyes sparkling.

"Saved by the bell." Will says with a chuckle. "I'll leave you to it." And walks out of the kitchen.

Hannibal reaches into his pocket and takes out his phone, swipes his finger across the screen to answer.

"Hello Alana."

Chapter End Notes

I wanted to call this chapter 'Cock Block' hahahaha

a kick and a shove

Chapter Notes

Hello Gorgeous.
I realized I didn't put a hello note at the beginning of the last chapter. My bad.
Anyway... how are you? you want a biscuit?

This chapter is half ok and half meh. I needed to get some things sorted.
Hope you're ok with it.

Love you x

“Thank you for coming to lunch with me Hannibal, I know you must be very busy, what with Jack and your patients.” Alana sips her oat milk latte, her eyes peering at Hannibal above the rim of the mug.

They’re sat in a quaint little bistro not far from Quantico. Knowing Alana would pick somewhere Hannibal approved he had let her choose, their breakfast together had proven her taste in establishments was up to standard.

It had been a few days since her call. Her interruption. And nothing has happened between Will and himself since standing in the kitchen breathing each others air. Back to normal business he supposes.

Hannibal watched her take another delicate sip and then place the mug down on the table with sure hands. She was confident, her shoulders straight, hair falling in lovely curls over her shoulders. She was wearing blue today and Hannibal knew she did this on days she needed to appear confident, red for dates, pastels for her patients. Predictable but pretty.

Hannibal took a sip of his own drink, an Americano, hard to get wrong and a true test of an establishments ability to cultivate and brew coffee, a drink with nowhere to hide.

“Truly Alana, it's no problem. Are you well?”

Alana folded in on herself a little, the wind out of her sails now she had been asked for specifics. Her eyes flickered to the pleasant view out of the window, across the street was a little park, the weather wasn't particularly warm but it was dry.

Alana sucked in a breath and twisted the mug on the table, her fingers fiddling with the handle.

"I'm worried Hannibal. About you. And this case." She said tentatively.

Hannibal raised a pale eyebrow, letting his chin fall slightly.

"I'm grateful for your concern but I can assure you I'm quite fine."

Alana sighed. "Hannibal…" she narrowed her eyes at him. "You're not being yourself. I'm worried that the incident with Tobias Budge has affected you but you don't realize. And this case is especially hard, for… an alpha."

Hannibal took a sip of his coffee, letting the liquid flow over his tongue, bitter but pleasant.

"May I ask how my behavior has changed?"

"For one you haven't been to the opera or any social events for months."

Hannibal now raised both of his eyebrows. "Listening to tales Alana?"

Alana shook her head and smiled. "While I'm not privy to all of your social circles, your absence has been noted. People talk. You're well known among many groups Hannibal."

Hannibal huffs out a laugh. “It is true I haven’t been socializing much. I have been very busy as you say.”

Alana seems to relax at Hannibal’s laugh. Her enquiry not seen as intrusive. “It’s not like you Hannibal, there was an excellent gallery exhibition opening a few weeks ago. You turned down the invitation.”

“Ah.”

Alana sits in silence, she’s waiting for Hannibal to explain himself. And Hannibal, well, he’s unsure for once on how to proceed. While he has been missing dates on his social calendar, choosing to spend his evenings with Will over putting on a fancy suit and drinking champagne, he cant tell Alana that.

If he doesn’t tell her something she will believe the case with the Omega Killer is affecting him, possibly telling Jack and getting him taken off the team, which he doesn’t want. She already thinks the events with Budge are still on his mind even after his assurances he is very much over it.

He wonders if he played the meek, mild mannered man too well.

Alana reaches across the table and puts her hand over his, gently squeezing.

“What is it Hannibal? You can talk to me.” Her eyes look at him beseechingly, the clear blue of her iris reflecting the light pouring in through the window.

In his minds eye her face is replaced with that of Will, his tear rimmed eyes and endless ocean gaze glaring at him, filled with heat and anger, not the delicate gentleness of Alana’s expression. Compassion is what compels Alana to speak, to reach out and Will’s is fear. Fear is Will’s motivation, wether it be for his safety, Adam’s wellbeing, Will deals with large amounts of fear everyday, regardless of how much Hannibal reassures’s him he is safe within his walls. And that fear is what fuels Will’s anger, his spite, hissing and scratching his way in the world.

The soft doe eyes of Alana blink at him, twinkling as the sun peaks out from behind a cloud and all Hannibal can think is ‘I wish I was home with Will.’

“I’ve met someone.” His mouth says without his brain asking it too.

Her eyebrows raise and Hannibal is surprised by the flood of emotions that pass over quickly her face, each chasing the one before it, surprise, happiness, jealousy, disappointment, then finally settling on happiness once again.

“That’s wonderful Hannibal!” She says patting his hand and withdrawing it. She picks up her mug again and sips her coffee.

“Thank you…” His brain is now trying to play catch up. Does he mention a name? Does he say their gender? What if she asks where they met?

“I’m not going to pry, you’ll share your secrets when you want to. Although…” she says with a cheeky grin “I do hope you don’t wait too long to introduce them. I gather it’s no one from your usual social group?”

“No, he isn’t one for crowds.”

“He?”

Shit.

Hannibal just puts his finger to his lip and smiles. Alana giggles.

“It’s a relief really. That you’re not hiding away alone. You deserve some happiness.” She says with a small smile and a tilt of her head. If it came from anyone else it would feel

patronizing. Although it does feel patronizing still Hannibal knows its from a good place in Alana's heart.

"We're taking it slowly. It's rather delicate still."

"Of course."

———————————-

When Hannibal opens the door to his home the first thing that greets him is the scent of Will in distress. All of the curtains have been drawn on the first floor as Hannibal walks from room to room searching for the owner of said scent. It's not overwhelming, suggesting he's hit the tail end of whatever Will has been worried about.

He turns the corner to walk upstairs to find Will when the man rushes downstairs to him instead, he looks as though he's about to barrel into Hannibal's chest seeking comfort but is instead met with a rough shove to the chest making him stop in his tracks.

Before he can express his anger at being attacked, Will is then indeed barreling into his chest, his arms folded up in front of him, his hand on his own mouth.

Hannibal stands dumb founded, his arms raised but not closing around the man pushed against him.

"Will?"

"The police, there was a man." Will shakes out. He's trembling, Hannibal can feel it now, the muscles under Will's skin shuddering where they're pressed together.

Hannibal finally bends his elbows and rests his hands on Will's back, he spreads his fingers and holds Will to him.

"Tell me from the beginning."

Will takes in a deep breath, he lets it out slowly. "I was in the kitchen with Adam, and someone knocked on the door. It's usually a postal worker and I ignore them, I've never opened the door."

Hannibal reaches into his pocket to retrieve his phone. No new notifications from the camera app on his phone. He frowns, the app must not be working.

"Go on" he tells Will putting his phone away and wrapping his arm around him again.

"But he didn't go, he stepped over the plants and looked through the lounge window, I saw him as I walked out of the kitchen. He didn't see me I think."

Will begins to pull away and Hannibal drops his arms. "Are you sure?"

Will bites his lip, his eyes darting about the hall they're still standing in. "Yes, he didn't react like it. But he went to the other window, tried to see in there. Then…"

"It's ok Will, you can tell me." Hannibal insists, he knows his own scent is changing. Scent blockers can only work so far. He's trying to hold back his anger at his privacy being invaded for the second time that day.

"He looked in but I was hiding behind the door frame. He then went to the back of the house, he must have climbed the gate. I grabbed Adam and went upstairs."

Hannibal lets out an involuntary growl and Will flinches. He wants to touch Will again to reassure him he's not the one the growl is aimed at but Will is already walking away into the kitchen.

He follows him and almost collides with Will as he stands in the doorway.

"Will?"

"I'm sorry." Will whispers. "I panicked, I didn't have time to clear it away, he saw this." Will walks to the island counter and picks up Adam's space cup. Beside it on the counter is a stuffed bunny Hannibal purchased early on in their stay. "He saw Adam's things."

"I see."

Will turns then, the cup gripped tightly in his fist. "He left after he looked through the back door. The windows on this floor Hannibal, he didn't look through them all. He saw this and left."

"Was it the same police officer that we spoke too?"

Will nods, his lip trembling. "It was Merry, the big one. He was checking we were still here."

"Did you see anyone else with him? Was he in uniform?"

"He was alone as far as I could tell. No uniform. He drove off." Will looks sheepish for a moment. "I watched him from your window."

Hannibal steps forward then and does touch Will, he lays his hands on the tops of his arms and holds them, applying a little pressure.

“Will, what car was he driving? Did you see it?”

Will, wide eyed from Hannibal’s sure grip on his arms looks up at Hannibal’s eyes.

“It was blue, small.”

Hannibal lets out a frustrated sigh. “It’s been here before.”

Will shakes his head slowly. “When?” He steps back again out of Hannibal’s grip.

“A month, maybe less. I thought nothing of it.” Hannibal says as he walks to the back door and opens it.

He steps out of the door looking at the ground, there are some spots of dirt here and there on the patio, no footprints. He follows the path to the back gate at the side of the house and checks the padlock, its untouched. When he turns back, Will has come out of the house and is standing on the patio, his arms wrapped around himself protectively, eyes scanning the garden.

“Do you think he set up the welfare check?” He asks Hannibal as he comes up to him.

“What do you mean?” Hannibal asks tilting his head.

Will, still looking out to the garden, searching. “Maybe… maybe he looked here before, saw me and Adam, wanted to know if we lived here? And then called it in himself?” He shakes his head. “Or anonymously. Made sure he was the one to come and talk to us?”

His bright eyes flicker up to Hannibal then as Hannibal stands with his back to the garden, looking up at the apparently useless camera over the back door.

“That is entirely possible.” Hannibal agrees.

Hannibal moves to enter the house and Will’s hand comes up to touch his arm.

“I’m sorry I pushed you… I was… I am… angry.”

Hannibal stops. “With me?”

Will turns then to face him fully. “Yes with you!”

Hannibal raises his barely there eyebrows. “May I ask why?”

“Hannibal” Will sighs. “Adam and I, we’re… we can’t contact you. You have a pin on the house phone. I don’t know your number.” He huffs exasperated. “If I could’ve called you, you might have got here in time to stop him.”

“Yes, I see.” Hannibal acquiesces. “You’re quite right. I can take the pin off the phone, leave my number programmed on speed dial.”

Will nods. “Hannibal…”

Hannibal pauses and takes Will’s hand as it’s falling from his touch on his arm. Will’s hand is dry, warm, callused from manual labour. Will’s breath catches in his throat as his fingers hold onto Hannibal’s own.

“I trust you Will.”

“I know.” Will whispers. “But the cop… what if it’s him?”

Hannibal following Will's train of thought easily, their minds so alike. "You said yourself the killer is an omega, that officer was very much an Alpha."

Will nods reluctantly. "And if I'm wrong?"

Hannibal smiles gently. "Do not doubt yourself dear Will."

Will huffs outs a small laugh and lets Hannibal's hand go. Hannibal feels the cold when Will's warmth is removed, his skin tingling. He goes into the house and gets a glass from the cupboard, filling it with water from the jug in the fridge. As he leans on the island counter he can see Adam peeking round the kitchen door frame, his curls bouncing as his head retreats quickly. Hannibal smiles.

"All is well Adam, you may come in."

Small bare toes appear first, clenching and unclenching on the hardwood floor. Then a little hand on the frame.

For Hannibal the hardwood turns to stone, the little feet on it dirty, as he follows the toes to the foot to the ankle, he can see bruises around the ankle bone, dried blood. The legs upon the ankles are also bare, the skin covered in goosebumps, the muscles trembling. The kitchen around Hannibal dissolves into darkness and the little feet take a step towards him. He doesn't want to look any higher, see the owner of those delicate, tiny bruised ankles but he cant stop his eyes lifting. The bottom of a ratty, damaged, cream colored dress comes into view, the hem in tatters. Hannibal holds his breath.

The vision is ended when Adam rushes into the room, past Hannibal to Will now closing the back door.

Hannibal takes a deep drink of his glass, finishing the water.

“What do we do about the guy?” Will asks, petting Adam on his head as he wraps his arms around Will’s leg.

“I shall return the favor and pay him a visit.” Hannibal replies.

———————————-

The North District Police Precinct of the Baltimore PD was approximately 30 minutes from Hannibal’s home. He had never been there personally but knew of its location. The building was modern, clean ground to roof windows, a white overhang roof, flags on their poles to the left go the entrance. Inside was similarly modern, the reception desk was white wood, plain walls and floors.

Hannibal walks up to the main deck, a stern looking older woman is sitting behind it, her fingers tapping endlessly on the keys of a computer to her left. She does a double tap when her eyes snap to Hannibal, openly looking him up and down appraising.

Hannibal puts on his best smile. “Hello, may I ask if Officer Merry is working today please?”

“Whats it about?” She asks, he eyes trailing up and down Hannibal again.

“He came to my house for a welfare check, I thought I might ask if there are any follow up questions he would like to ask.” Hannibal smiles again.

She turns to the computer again and starts tapping away. Hannibal waits in silence taking in the space around him. Officers walk between the desks behind her, some come in the through the front door and eye Hannibal as well.

She finally turns back to him. “Merry is unavailable right now.”

“Ah that is shame. When would he be able to talk to me?”

“He’s on leave for another week.” She answers. “Officer Raymond was on that call with him. Wanna talk to him?”

Hannibal shakes his head. “No thank you. I can wait for Officer Merry. A week you say?”

She nods. “Anything else I can help you with? Do you want to leave a message?”

“No thank you, have a nice day.”

Hannibal takes his leave and exits the building. While he’s walking to his car he pulls up a contact on his phone. If talking to Merry through the legal channels wasn’t on the cards, then illegal ones would have to used. The phone rang four times before it was picked up and answered with a grunt.

“It’s Hannibal Lecter.”

Jack Crawford calls Hannibal to come to Quantico just as he turns into his own street. Hannibal sighs and answers. He hangs up after agreeing to drive to Quantico as he pulls into the driveway. He sits in the car with the engine running debating wether to go inside just to leave again.

He wonders if Will has heard the car and is fretting behind the door or if the cunning man already knows the sound of the engine or has looked though the window and seen Hannibal sitting there.

The likening Will to a dog pops into Hannibal's mind for a moment and Hannibal chuckles to himself at the idea of Will with his ears perked, standing behind the front door, his tail wagging, waiting for Hannibal to enter the house. He pushes the thought aside reasoning that Will is more like a cat, neither excited nor unhappy that Hannibal has come home, only slightly annoyed that his peace has been interrupted and wether or not to let Hannibal pet him without being hissed at and scratched.

He decides he needs a thermos of coffee for the ride and to go in. It's not the thought of seeing if Will is happy or not to see him.

He opens the door and Will isn't in the foyer, tail wagging, happy to see his return. A cat then.

He goes to the kitchen and starts the coffee machine, adding ground beans to the filter. He then hears a loud happy shriek from further in the house.

Following the sound to the den he pushes the door open further to see Will sitting on the couch, his knees spread, with Adam on the floor between them, his head on Will's belly. Adam lets out another squeal then jumps up flapping his hands in excitement.

Will laughs and the sound pulls Hannibal into the room, his ribs giving that familiar tug.

"What has you so excited little pup?" Hannibal asks Adam, he knows he's not going to answer but when he looks at Will he can see the appreciation in the omega's eyes.

"The baby is kicking." Will says laying his hand on his stomach where Adam's head was resting. "Come and feel."

Hannibal is only momentarily taken back by the invitation, he tries to hide his reaction but Will is whip smart and see's it, of course he see's it.

"It's ok Hannibal, come." Will holds out his hand.

Hannibal moves to stand in front of Will and takes the proffered hand, letting himself be guided to sit down beside him, his hand placed on Will's belly, Will's hand covering his.

He waits, holding his breath. Will's body is warm beneath his t-shirt, the skin on his stomach firm, pulled taunt by the growing pup inside him. While he still isn't very big bump wise, there is no doubting that Will is pregnant.

What seems like forever but in reality is only a few moments, the pup gives a strong kick, earning a little laugh from Will and a gasp from Hannibal.

Another kick has Hannibal smiling, his hand moving to follow the movement of the pup wiggling under his hand.

"They're strong." Hannibal says trying not to sound breathless.

"Yeah." Will breathes.

They both look up at the same time and their eyes meet. Will's look a little glassy, like he's trying to fight back tears, pride sits heavy in his gaze and Hannibal smiles.

Hannibal can feel himself being drawn into Will's orbit, leaning forwards just slightly, captured by the sapphire hue of Will's eyes. He parts his lips and licks the bottom one and Will traces the movement his own tongue mirroring the motion.

A little hand grabs Hannibal's wrist and tugs and he realizes Adam has slotted himself back between Will's knees and is pulling his hand off of Will's belly. He sits back giving Adam

access, breaking eye contact as he does.

He hears Will take in a shuddering breath. His own breathing not much different.

“Did you…” Will starts. “Did you find him?”

Hannibal stands and smoothes down his coat, stepping away from the couch, turning to the door.

“Unfortunately Officer Merry is unavailable until next week, he’s on leave.” He looks back at Will, who is now frowning, his brow furrowed.

“Oh.”

“Not to worry Will, I have other means to find somebody.”

Will chuckles. “I bet you do.”

Hannibal turns around then taking his keys out of his pocket.

“I have been asked to go to Quantico, Jack Crawford called me.”

Will nods slowly. “Ok”

Hannibal pauses. He can feel Will’s reluctance for him to leave. The air is heavy with the weight of fear. It’s not a scent necessarily, but a fog of oppressive feelings. And Hannibal can understand why.

There's no way to know if Merry will return, escalate his prying. And with the camera's not working Hannibal wouldn't know if the officer were prowling his property again.

"Best to stay indoors Will. And I have programmed the house phone with my cell number. Just press the star key then 1. I will answer."

Will nods again and pets Adam's head where it lays on his belly waiting for the pup inside to give another kick.

"Will."

Will's turns his head then in the direction of where Hannibal is, his eyes not going any higher than the hem of Hannibal's coat.

"I will come if you call." He says.

"I know." Will gives him a small but genuine smile, it's a little lopsided.

Hannibal nods although he knows Will won't see it and heads back out of the house, locking the front door behind himself. It's only when he's halfway to Quantico does he remember he left his coffee still brewing in the kitchen.

interrogation

Chapter Notes

Well Twitter voted... actually 9 people voted and you have won! congrats.
Have another chapter babes.
Love you <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal stood in the labs of the Behavioral Science Unit of the FBI looking at Price's gleeful expression. Price had an image of a young omegan man on his computer, the image looked like a mug shot, the boy on the screen looked troubled, unhappy. His blue eyes held a twinkle of rebelliousness that Hannibal was sure Will wouldn't have had at the same age.

"You were right Doctor Lecter. He's an omega." He chirped.

"I was unaware the ORO took fingerprints of the omegas registered with them." Hannibal says leaning over Price's chair slightly to get a better look at the young man on the screen.

"Same." Beverly joined them. "After you said he might be an omega I called the ORO. Turns out they take all the prints of the omegas as they get registered. Took forever to let me have access to the database, as if we're not FBI." She blows out a puff of air in exasperation. "Shame the guy is missing though."

Jack was standing by an examination table, his jacket off, his tie pulled a little loose. He looked exhausted. His arms were folded across his chest. "This gets us nowhere if we cant find the guy." He huffs.

Hannibal straightens up and drapes his coat over the back of a chair in the corner of the room. He walks to Jack, standing still as he watches Jack fuss over his shirt cuffs.

"Could this omega be another victim? The print placed there to distract us?" He asks.

“Oh for sure.” Zeller adds, he’s at his own desk. “Although the ORO lost track of this guy…” He picks up a sheet of paper, scanning it to find the information he wants. “Phew, 14 years ago. Said he was paired up with some rich guy, then ran away apparently a few weeks later. Poof! Gone.”

“I see.” Hannibal mulls this over. “Did he run away or was he taken? Omega trafficking is a possibility.” He thinks of Will’s own experience of trafficking, how he was sold by the son of his first pairing. His painful life that followed. It twists something in Hannibal’s gut and he tampers down the urge to growl.

Jack nods slowly. “We’re trying to find out more information about him but so far the ORO are being as tight lipped as they can. Like Beverly said it took them a week to agree on us running the print.”

“Quite unhelpful.” Hannibal agrees.

“We interviewed the most recent victims family.” Jack adds.

Beverly walks over to join them and leans on the table next to Jack, she keeps a professional distance between them, crosses her legs at the ankle, folds her own arms.

“Guess who they remember.” She says, her eyebrows raising.

“Miss Brownlie I assume.”

“Yep.” Beverly says, the corner of her lip pulling up in a smirk.

“We’re calling her in for questioning again, but we have to be careful, if she’s innocent we could be seen has harassing her, if she’s not, she might run.” Jack sighs. He runs his hand down his face, his fingers rasping on his stubble.

“You believe the two might be connected? Miss Brownlie and this young man?” Hannibal asks.

“Only one way to find out.”

———————-

Melissa Brownlie was not pleased to be back in Quantico. She sat in an interrogation room, arms crossed, her brow furrowed in a frown.

Behind the two way mirror Hannibal and Beverly exchanged looks. Beverly looked critical. She stood with her hip cocked, bitting the inside of her bottom lip, hand on hip.

“She doesn’t look happy.” She whispers. “She was at work when officers brought her in.”

“Understandably upsetting.” Hannibal agrees. He watches at Jack enters the room, manila folder in hand. He had done his shirt button back up, straightened his tie, suit jacket once again on his shoulders.

Jack pulls out a chair and sits opposite Melissa and places the folder on the desk between them gently.

“Miss Brownlie.” Jack starts. “Thank you for coming back in.”

His voice over the speaker is tinny, slightly distorted.

Melissa huffs. “Didn’t seem like I had an option. Your men practically dragged me in.”

Hannibal notices the difference between this and their initial meeting. His first impression of Melissa was that she was shy, a little reserved under scrutiny. Her employers had said she was kind, gentle. This version of Melissa seemed haughty, stubborn.

“I apologize for interrupting you at work, but we needed to speak to you urgently.” Jack pushed.

Melissa tries to neutralize her expression but her anger is evident. Jack leans his elbows on the desk, shifting forward in his chair.

“I’d like you to look at some photos for me.” Jack opens the folder, keeping the contents hidden from her view, opening it sideways like a laptop. He pulls out the first photo, its of the latest victim. He slides it towards her, turning it to face her the right way up.

“Do you know this man?”

Melissa looks down at the photo, her mouth turning down at the corners. Her fingers gently graze the corner of the photo, affectionate.

“Yes. He was a patient at Johns Hopkins. I… he was going to have a baby.” Her voice is quiet, touched with sorrow. “It’s awful what happened to him.”

Jack nods slowly, his head bobbing. “Mr Stoller was your patient?”

Melissa nods, dragging her eyes away from the photo she looks back at Jack. “I performed a scan on him a few weeks before, you know.”

“I see.” Says Jack, he picks up the photo and places it back in the folder and retrieves another one, Melissa lets out a small gasping sound as Jack places it down, turning it to face her again.

She puts her hand to her mouth then looks at Jack furiously. “Whats the meaning of this?” She almost shouts.

“We have reason to believe this man has been involved with the murders.” He taps his index finger in the photo. “Do you know who this is?”

Melissa slumps back in her chair and turns her face away from Jack, away from the mirror.

In the observation room there is a tap on the door. Beverly opens it as she is closer and finds Zeller looking a little out of breath on the other side. He has a piece of paper clenched in his fist.

“ORO finally got back to us. You’re not gonna believe this.” He rasps holding out the paper to Katz.

“Omg.” She breaths and hands the paper to Hannibal who scans it in the dim light of the room.

Listed as next of kin for the omega is Melissa Brownlie. Hannibal looks up to the room through the mirror again. He can see the sag of Melissa’s shoulders, the slight trembling of her frame.

“Miss Brownlie do you know this man?” Jack urges again, pushing the photo closer to her on the table.

Melissa sniffs, she turns back to look at Jack, not looking at the image. “Yes, that’s my brother. Matthew.” He takes a deep breath.

“Do you know where he is?”

Melissa lets of a shaky laugh. “He went missing years ago.”

“His surname is listed as ‘Brown’, did you-“

“I changed mine.” Melissa cuts in.

“I see.” Jack says. “Can I ask why?”

Melissa looks like she’s going to deny him then sighs, dropping her own elbows on the table and leaning forward.

“My dad… our dad… he wasn’t a nice guy ok? He was an alpha, all testosterone and beer fueled bar fights. He was a shitty dad. After he sold Matt to that asshole at the ORO he practically kicked me out, got married. I had my mother’s surname because the jerk refused to marry her.”

She sits back again putting distance between them. “He came snooping around a few years ago, wanted money. I changed my name to hide, but I couldn’t let it go. Not all the way.”

“Where was your mother during this?”

“Dead. She died not long after Matt was married off. It hurt her to see him so unhappy. Probably what killed her in the end.” She looks away from Jack again, towards the mirror.

Inside the observation room Zeller lets out a whispering whistle. “That sucks.”

“Indeed.” Hannibal posits.

“And you have no idea where your brother is now?” Jack says a little louder than necessary.

Melissa's head snaps back to look at Jack, a scowl on her face. "No."

_____

Jack wraps up the interview, informing Melissa not to leave the state, they will be in contact. Back in his office he slumps down in his chair, loosening his tie again.

The rest of the team have returned to the lab, plenty of work to be done.

Hannibal sits opposite Jack, coffee in hand. He notices the way Jack's shoulders slope, taking in a deep breath.

"Do you believe her?" He asks.

Jack runs his hand down his face again and sighs. "I'm not sure. Do you?"

Hannibal takes his time to answer, running the interview over in his head, snap shots of the way Melissa held herself, her defense posture when asked if she had seen her brother recently.

"I believe she believes what she said was true." He answers. "She was certainly upset when you produced the photo of Matthew."

Jack sighs again. "We're no closer. I've got a nurse who treated 2 of the victims at least, a missing potential subject not seen for approximately 14 years who happens to be her brother and 8 families wanting justice."

"A potential subject and potential victim. Matthew Brown could easily be alive and being coerced into helping our killer."

“How does a fingerprint of a missing man end up on the tree holding a victim?” Jack sips his coffee, grimaces when the heat hits his tongue.

“He was either there, or his hand was.”

Jack looks up and chuckles. “Ok, ok. So what? Matthew has been or will be a victim and the killer cut his hand off and deliberately touched the tree.”

“A way to throw us off the scent.”

“It’s defiantly thrown us something.” Jack grouses.

A tap at the door makes both Alphas look up as Alana walks into the room, a smile on her face at seeing Hannibal, he smiles back. Hannibal can see how her demeanor has changed at his appearance in Jack’s office. She’s lost the line between her eyebrows as she looks to Jack, greeting him without the icy undertone of annoyance. Their coffee date having eased her worries.

“I was with a patient when you called. Was Melissa Brownlie’s interview recorded?” She asks coming to stand beside Hannibal.

Jack nods and opens his laptop, the file already in his inbox. He clicks on it and offers his chair to Alana so she can sit and watch the whole recording without leaning forward to see the screen. He stands beside her, focusing on the images on the screen.

As it starts up Hannibal picks up a manila folder on the desk. “Are these the interview notes from Mr Stoller’s family?”

“Yes, please help yourself, you might see something we don’t.”

Hannibal smiles and sits back in the uncomfortable chair, the back letting out a squeak as he does. He knows why the chairs in Jack's office are designed so. He'd call it Alpha posturing but he knows it's Jacks way of making sure people don't get too comfortable and take up his time.

He folds his legs, knee over ankle and opens the folder. Images of Mr Stoller are behind the front page of the document. His drivers license image, a picture of him and his husband in Disney Land, Mickey Mouse ears atop their heads, smiling and holding ice creams.

He looked happy, normal. The next picture Mr Stollers hair is a bit longer, curly, falling over his forehead, he looks younger, perhaps 20-22. His eyes are shining as he holds up his hand showing off his engagement ring to the camera.

Hannibal thinks of Will and all the things he has missed out on. While Hannibal has never been interested in theme parks it seems to be part of American culture to go at least once. The younger Mr Stoller with his engagement ring, Will never having that feeling of joy knowing he was wanted so. Will had told him he was happy with his first Alpha, Gerald, but that it wasn't a romantic relationship, just a friendship.

His eyes scan the next document, a transcript of the interview. There are lots of pauses, presumably where the other Mr Stoller had to take a moment to gather himself.

Hannibal's mind is drifting again to Will, sitting in the den together in the evening, reading, discussing the countries Hannibal has been too, Will's bright eyes wide, listening with eagerness. His eyes catch a sentence and he has to read it twice more before it sets in.

At the desk Alana and Jack have finished watching Melissa Brownlie's interview. Jack stands back to allow Alana to rise and she moves round the desk to sit next to Hannibal.

"Well, she wasn't particularly helpful. Or happy at seeing your interest in her brother." Alana says.

She turns to Hannibal then her brows raised only to have them fall again. "Hannibal are you alright?" She reaches out and puts her hand on his forearm.

Hannibal looks up, his brow furrowed. “What Mr Stoller say’s here, about the police.” He hands the folder back to jack, open where he had been reading.

Jack reads the line Hannibal motions too as he stands, his movements stiff.

“What about it?” Jack asks surprised by Hannibal’s insistence.

“Did any of the other families mention they were visited by the police?” Hannibal asks trying to keep the tremble out of his voice.

“I think the Pavers did, victim number 4.” Jack answers. “Do you think there’s a connection?”

“Hannibal what is it?” Asks Alana standing herself to take the folder from Jacks hand. She finds the line that Hannibal had pointed out. “Then the police came and did a well fare check…” She looks up at Hannibal as he pulls his phone from his pocket, the ring tone loud in the semi quietness of the room.

Hannibal looks at the screen. The caller ID reads ‘Home’.

Chapter End Notes

Oh ooooooop....

do you still love me?

Run

Chapter Notes

Hello Gorgeous
I couldn't leave you for long, I love you, I wouldn't leave you hanging like that.

x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal runs. He doesn't know how many people he passes, or pushes out of the way. He barely registers their outraged shouts as he dashes past them. He's vaguely aware of Jack shouting his name. Alana calling for him.

Hannibal runs until he can feel his feet ache, his thighs burning. His breath coming out in huffs, he runs with a singular thought in his head. Will and Adam. Will and Adam. Will. Will. Will. He skids around corners, uses the stairs because stopping for an elevator would mean stopping getting to Will. He bounds down the concrete steps taking them 2, 3, 4 at a time. Bursting through the exit on the first floor he's met with gasps, security shouting at him to slow down, but he can't. He won't. He practically throws himself through the double door exit to the building.

He gets into his car and starts the engine without bothering to put on his seat belt. He see's Jack rushing out of the building, his face stern, puffing breath.

Hannibal rolls down his window as he passes him, slowing only briefly to shout.

"The Killer Jack, he's at my home!" Then he speeds away.

The drive from Quantico to his home normally takes an hour on a good day with no traffic. Hannibal makes it in forty five minutes. He can pay the speeding tickets when they arrive. They're welcome to take him to court and suspend his license. Maybe he'll have a sympathetic Judge who understands the importance of an Alpha defending their Omega.

His mind spins with thoughts of Will. His Omega. Taken from their home. He doesn't have the time or the patience right now to doubt that Will is his omega. Admitting it seems to make the world move faster, his hands steadier on the wheel, his foot push harder on the pedal.

Will and Adam's name are on repeat in his mind. Will Adam Will Adam Will Adam. Adam, his pup, the Omega Killer has no interest in the pups of the omegas he takes but previous victim's pups have been hurt, left injured and crying as their mother is taken from them. Forced to watch as their mother screams, then left alone regardless of age. Adam crying alone, the thought makes Hannibal snarl. And Will, he would fight, he wouldn't go easy. Did he manage to fight the killer off? Is he returning home to Will in his kitchen, nursing a bruised eye, victorious? Is he returning home to find the body of Will laid out on his kitchen floor having fought to the death? Hannibal lets out an enraged yell, feral, and slaps his steering wheel.

He pulls up to the front of his house with a screech of tires and is out of the car before he puts on the hand brake. He runs up the path to his front door where a Police Officer is guarding the entrance. Police tape forming an ominous cross on the frame. Jack must have called ahead hoping the police would arrive before they could.

"Sorry sir" the officer puts up his hand "This is a crime scene."

Hannibal growls "This is my home." And stops barely a foot away from the officer.

"Its a crime scene sir, I cant let you in."

Hannibal takes a menacing step forwards, his lip curling, a deep growl coming from his chest.

"You will move." He snarls.

Behind him Jack Crawfords black SUV pulls up. He and Alana Bloom exit the vehicle together, Crawford's shoulders are pulled back, ready to take on the police officers at the scene. Alana rushing past him to Hannibal's side.

"Hannibal?" She asks tentatively. "Why would the killer be here?"

Before Jack makes it up the path he has his badge in hand and shouts to the officer blocking the door to move.

Hannibal pushes in through the door before the officer is fully out of the way and stops in his tracks.

The scene before him is one of devastation. Around him vases, flowers, ornaments knocked from their homes, shattered on the ground. The rug has been pulled, it lies bunched up near a door, a painting on the wall has a whole punched through it. Hannibal takes it all in in mere seconds then he's moving, towards the kitchen, Will would take the fight to the kitchen, 'weapons' he thinks.

The scent of blood hits him first. It's thick with iron and heat. Tainted with the smell of a pregnant omega. It's Will's blood. A lot of Will's blood. The chaos in here is worse, the counter top is scratched, deep gouges taken out of the wooden surface. The cabinets above the fridge have dents in them, doors are broken. There is glass on the floor from the cabinet doors, the contents inside shattered. A knife lays on the floor by the sink, it's bloody but not from Will. The scent is one Hannibal doesn't know.

For a moment pride well's up in Hannibal's chest. Will. His beautiful, ferocious Will. How glorious this fight must have been.

His brought out of his revery by Jack's voice calling his name from the foyer.

Hannibal turns and rushes back to Jack ready to take the stairs when Jack grabs his arm, holding him in place.

“Hannibal what the hell happened here?” He demands.

“No.” Is all he gets in reply as Hannibal shakes off his grip and takes the stairs two at a time, to the second floor. Will and Adam’s room, maybe they’re hiding there waiting for Hannibal. He pushes the door open but leaves immediately.

The room is undisturbed, nothing out of place. The fight having stayed on the first floor.

He stands in the hall. His eyes closed and focuses. Lifting his nose to the air, fighting past the smell of blood downstairs, his own anger and panic he can scent a faint trace of baby powder. He turns to the study door and opens it.

Hannibal strides across the room, opens his closet door, goes down onto his hands and knees. Before he reaches out to move the cardboard box at the back of the small space, Hannibal realizes he’s praying. God, infinite in His cruelty would find great pleasure in taunting Hannibal this way. He took away one pup, a sandy haired, enchanting little sister, her smile the reason for Hannibal’s beating heart. For Him to take this one too would be part of God’s terrific game. Hannibal has played God many times, maybe this time God will play him right back.

He shifts the box slightly and hears a tiny squeak.

Hannibal’s breath leaves him all at once. “Adam.” He sighs.

Suddenly the box is heaved to the side, a blur of a pup surges toward him letting out a shrill cry. Small arms wrap around his neck, skinny legs wrap around his waist as he straightens up to crush the boy to his body. Adam buries his face in Hannibal’s neck and sobs, his narrow chest heaving against Hannibal’s ribs.

Hannibal sits crossed legged on the study floor, Adam in his arms and closes his eyes, runs his hand through the pups soft curls, shushing the weeping babe. A chorus of cries pound in his ears. Rolling into one another, overflowing from one cry to the next.

His Mother crying as she watches his Father be shot and fall to the snowy ground, his sister screaming as he pulls her away from their mothers hands, to run, to hide, Will's desperate cries after Hannibal locked him in the basement when Adam had escaped, and finally Adam's sobbing as Hannibal holds him tight in his embrace. His mind swirls as the cries come to a crescendo, rising and rising until they're almost impossible to distinguish from each other then all but one drop into silence, the gentle sound of Adam sniffling into his neck, gripping Hannibal as tight as Hannibal is holding him.

Relief and anger, so much anger, flood his veins. Adam is slackening in his arms, a thin arm moving to Hannibal's chest to pop a delicate thumb into his mouth.

Hannibal's legs have never felt so weak but he stands and leaves the study.

_____-

As Hannibal gets to the bottom of the stairs he can see Jack on the phone, barking orders. He wants forensics here now, drop everything.

Alana looks from him to Adam and reaches out her arms as if to take him. Adam lets out a tiny cry and grips Hannibal harder, his fist grasping the fabric of his suit jacket.

"Hannibal, who is this?" She's trying to keep her voice light, gentle. She's trained to work with families and children, knows how to gentle a frightened child.

Hannibal reaches his hand up and covers Adam's eyes with his broad palm, the pup doesn't protest, he pushes into Hannibal's hand a little.

Hannibal tilts his head towards the hall and walks to the den, noting the lack of broken items. The fight must have been quick, brutal. Alana follows him silently.

They enter the room and Hannibal picks up the tv remote, selecting Adam's favorite space documentary, the sound down low. He hopes it will sooth the pup just a little.

He sits down on the couch, in Will's spot and takes his hand from the boys eyes. Adam doesn't open them, although he does seem to settle a little now Hannibal isn't standing in the noisy chaos of the foyer.

"Hannibal?" Alana tries again sitting on Hannibal's chair. She tucks her hair behind her ear, she's nervous.

Hannibal takes a deep breath, his mind going a thousand miles a minute. He'll tell Alana the same story he told the police, apologise for lying. Look remorseful. Hope it will work.

Before he can open his mouth Alana holds up her hand. "No, you know what? This is none of my business. Just… just tell me how I can help."

Sweet, beautiful Alana. Hannibal could love her right now. He smiles at her grateful. She smiles gently back.

He settles back, Adam still clinging to him, eyes closed, thumb between his lips suckling.

"This is Adam." Hannibal says quietly. His tone low, letting the sound rumble in his chest, he feels Adam relax a little more.

"Hello Adam." Alana tries, she perches on the edge of the seat to look at the pups face better.

"Adam is autistic and non-verbal." He explains.

Alana's brow furrows, sadness in her eyes. "I see." She breathes. "Adam, you're safe now. Hannibal is here and won't let anything happen to you."

Hannibal is grateful of her not talking over him as if the pup isn't in the room. Adam might not talk but he can hear and he understands.

"Adam is… Will's pup. A friend who has been staying with me."

Alana looks up at Hannibal then and knows who he is referring to, the lie she has been told. He can see the pain in her eyes for a brief flicker then its gone. She's to intelligent to not make the connection between the omega 'patient' Hannibal had mentioned so many months ago and the man he refers to now as a friend. That friend being the one Hannibal talked about only a few days ago as his possible relationship. Hannibal would feel regret here for lying if he were able to feel regret. But Alana isn't someone who can pull those types of emotions from him, so he sits and waits.

She takes a deep breath. "Ok." She says simply.

Hannibal nods and begins to stroke Adam's hair, hoping the familiar affection will help.

"When I told you about a my patient- "

Alana holds up her hand again to silence him. "Hannibal, your private life is just that. Please don't try and explain it away."

"Still, I would like to apologize." He offers.

Alana nods and gives him a small congenial smile. He has the feeling he's in for a stern lecture on lying to friends later.

The door swings open, letting in a gust of blood scented air and Jack strides into the room. Hannibal feels Adam go tense in his arms, his little hand clutching at his suit jacket once more where it had begun to go limp.

Alana stands and looks between Jack and Hannibal, then down at Adam. “Jack, this young man is Adam, he’s non-verbal.” The fierce look in her eye at Jack makes the man look a little sheepish. ‘Don’t upset him’ it says.

Jack nods and Alana leaves the room, pulling the door closed behind her, the sound of her small heels clicking down the hall.

_____-

The noise of people in the house doesn’t lessen. Forensics, police, FBI scour the house. Hannibal is glad he had the forethought to not hunt recently, the only meat in his fridge is the non-human kind. The trapdoor locked and hidden away.

Beverly practically cheers when she see’s the bloody knife on the floor when Jack tells her its the assailants not the victims blood on the blade.

Hannibal had sat with Jack for only a few moments explaining who Will was, that he was a friend escaping an abusive relationship, living here with Hannibal while he sorted things out. He left out the details of how he feels about Will, about Adam. Jack isn’t stupid though, you don’t become the head of the Behavioral Science Unit for the FBI without being able to read between the lines.

He listens to Hannibal, nods his head at the appropriate moments and when he stands he reaches down to Hannibal and gives his shoulder a tight squeeze.

Hannibal is left with Adam for as long as they can be left sitting in a crime scene and eventually Alana comes to them. She offers to watch Adam while Hannibal packs some clothes for them both but Adam won’t let go of Hannibal suit jacket, crying out shrilly when Hannibal tries to take him under the arm and pull him away.

“Alana, would you mind helping Adam and I pack please?”

She smiles and agrees, the three of them making their way past the foyer, Hannibal's hand over Adam's eyes once more to shield him from the bloody scene.

In Hannibal's room he pulls out a small suitcase from the walk in closet, using one hand to open drawers, retrieve boxer-briefs and socks for himself, some sleepwear. He chooses two simple button down shirts, two suits (with waistcoats and ties). He collects his toiletries and places them on the bed where Alana is folding everything and packing it away. Hannibal holds his tongue as she folds his shirt knowing it will be creased as he unpacks. Now is not the time for lessons in laundry.

He leaves her to it and goes into Will's room, Adam still attached to his side.

"Would you sit on the bed please?" Hannibal murmers into Adam's curls. The pup loosens his hold, relaxed now he is in a safe space that smells like his mother. The comfort of his scent easing his tension somewhat.

Hannibal turns and deposits the pup on the bed, stroking his curls as Adam lays down on his side, rubbing his face on the pillow. Hannibal reaches over him and picks up the stuffed rabbit toy and tucks it against Adam's side, the pup grabbing it and holding it tight in his arms.

"Good boy, thank you."

Hannibal then moves around the room quickly but quietly, now he's unencumbered by Adam keeping him one handed.

He makes a small pile of Adam's clothes, a then takes one of Will's discarded t-shirts from the floor where it was dumped and adds that too. In the top of the closet is a duffle bag that will suit his needs, he pulls it down and is surprised by the weight of it.

He puts it on the bed, pulling open the zip and frowns. Inside are snack bars, little boxes of raisins. He sighs. Old habits are hard to break he supposes. He leaves them in the bag and puts Adam's belongings on top.

He crouches by the bed as Alana appears in the door way, his suitcase now pulled behind her on little wheels.

“It’s time to go.” He whispers to the boy, pushing a curl from his forehead. Adam reaches out and Hannibal pulls him into his arms again. The pup clings to the rabbit, holding it over his own eyes.

He nods to Alana and she leads the way through the house, down the stairs. As she steps around the little yellow cards on the foyer floor Hannibal turns to the kitchen. He scans the room knowing he saw something he needs while looking for Will earlier.

Zeller is in the kitchen taking a swab of the blood on the floor by the back door, its a large smear, he holds up the little sample and puts it in a baggy, looking up at Hannibal as he walks to the kitchen counter to collect Adam’s toy firetruck, popping it into his pocket.

“Hey.” Zeller says nervously looking between him and Adam.

“Mr Zeller.” Hannibal replies. He sees Zeller open his mouth to say more but he doesn’t stop to listen. He has to get out of the room that’s filled with Will’s blood. The scent sits heavy on the back of his tongue and makes his teeth itch.

He strides through the foyer again, Adam’s eyes covered with his bunny. He doesn’t stop walking, not when Price calls his name or Jack looks like he’s about to approach him. He finds Alana on the sidewalk beside a black SUV. She looks apprehensive, that maybe she expects him to argue that he can drive but he climbs into the back seat of the car with no fuss. Adam clings to his shoulders, refusing to be put in his own seat.

“He can stay on your lap, it’s ok.” Alana says sliding into the other back passenger seat.

“Where are we going?” He asks as the driver pulls away.

“ Either my place or a safe house? Both are near Quantico. It’s your choice really.” She offers.

Hannibal thinks on it. He’s not sure how suitable a safe house would be for Adam. A strange place filled with different scents, the home bland, offering little comfort. Or Alana’s home. Yes it would smell like Alana, but Adam didn’t seem particularly afraid of her, weary yes but she’s the only person he’s ever met besides Hannibal. Her calm demeanor would help settle the pup and her home, Hannibal knows, is warm, welcoming.

“If it wouldn’t be too much of an imposition, may we stay with you?” Hannibal asks.

Alana smiles and nods, her eyes softening as she looks at Adam. “Of course.”

_____

The drive takes roughly an hour and Hannibal wonders how many speeding fines he will receive for his drive from Quantico to his home.

Alana’s home is how Hannibal remembers it, warm, calm. The driver of the SUV, an FBI agent, escorts them to the front door then stands guard outside, a silent sentry. They enter the kitchen and Adam starts squirming in Hannibal’s arms, letting out a little whine.

“I believe Adam might need the restroom.” He feels Adam head shift against his collar bone, an estimation of a nod.

“Oh sure!” Alana says. “You remember where it is?”

“Yes, thank you.” Hannibal walks out of the room, follows the corridor to the left and opens the bathroom door.

The room is brightly lit, clean with lavender accents, soap, shower curtain. He pulls Adam from his arms, still a struggle and puts him on the floor on his feet.

“You may use the toilet Adam.”

Adam lowers the bunny from his eyes and looks about the room, he shuffles towards the toilet and Hannibal busies himself washing his hands, giving the boy some privacy. Adam then joins him at the sink and washes his own hands, Hannibal passes him the towel to dry them and Adam promptly uses it then drops it on the floor.

“Like father like son.” Hannibal smiles then falters. He tries not to let his scent change with the dismay he’s suddenly feeling but Adam makes a little squeak beside him and takes his hand.

They leave the bathroom together, Adam walking beside him, his head hanging, eyes on his own feet. As they enter the kitchen again his eyes briefly rise to take in the room then drop again.

He picks Adam up and puts him on a bar stool at the island counter. Alana’s kitchen is filled with sunlight, the large windows letting in streams of light. It’s well appointed, her love of cooking evident. The room smells like coffee and Alana pushes a mug of it towards him as he settles on the other bar stool next to Adam.

A glass of orange juice is in front of the boy but he doesn’t reach for it, still clutching the rabbit to his chest. Hannibal takes the fire truck toy from his pocket to give to the boy, but as he stretches his hand out to place it on the counter he notices it’s splashed with blood. Tiny droplets cover the windscreen and back wheel now dry. He didn’t see it before, too anxious to leave his own kitchen. His hand shakes as he stands up and moves over to the sink, turning on the hot tap.

Alana comes up beside him, reaching through the stream of steaming water and places her hand over his. “I’ll clean this. Go sit down Hannibal.” She folds her fingers around the toy.

“No, I…” Hannibal starts but he doesn’t know what to say, his hand trembles as he releases the truck for her to clean.

He turns to look at her then and can see the empathy and pain in her own eyes as she watches her friend struggle. The firetruck drops into the sink as she reaches up and wraps her arms around his shoulders, embracing him.

He bends forward, she’s so much shorter than him, and rests his forehead on her shoulder, pulling his own arms around her slender form, accepting the hug and comfort it brings. His breath coming out in shaky gasps. Maybe he’s crying. It’s been so long he doesn’t recognize the feeling.

“I was too late.” He whispers. “I was too late.”

Chapter End Notes

DUN DUN DUUUUUUN...
hehe kisses <3 do you still love me?

Day One

Chapter Notes

Hey Gorgeous
How you been? I fond some time to put some words down and this chapter appeared. Ta Da!!
Hope you like it....

Day One.

Hannibal stretches and cracks his spine, then he rolls his neck and that cracks too. He hears Alana stifle a giggle from behind in the kitchen as she takes a seat at the island.

“I’m glad you find my ailing joints funny Alana.” He says looking over his shoulder, he fills his mug with coffee and sits beside her. She’s hiding her smile behind her mug, unsuccessfully.

“The joys of sharing a bed with a child.” She laughs.

Hannibal rolls and clicks his neck again. “I did not realize someone so small could take up so much space.”

She huffs out a laugh again, placing her mug on the counter. “He’s a starfish huh?”

“Not so much a starfish, more of a limpet.” He smiles briefly thinking of the pup currently still asleep in the guest bed.

Hannibal had tried to persuade Adam to sleep in the bed alone while he slept in the lounge on the pull out bed, it had lasted roughly 30 minutes before the pup was crying. He had intended

to calm the boy, cuddle him until he fell asleep then leave but exhaustion and the feeling of the small body snuggled against him had won out and he ended up staying.

When he woke at 6am he was on the edge of the bed, Adam plastered to his side, half the bed empty. He had got up and tucked the blankets under Adam's sleeping body affectively pinning him to the bed on one side to prevent him from rolling off of it.

Alana's shower was smaller than his own but it was warm and he felt the stiffness in his joints from running the day beforehand ease a little. His back and neck notwithstanding.

Now sitting in the kitchen as the early morning light cascaded through the large windows his thought we once again on Will.

Alana could probably see the tension begin to thrum through him, she reached out and put her hand over his as it rested on the surface of the island.

"They'll find him Hannibal. Jack will find him." She cooed.

"I don't doubt that, I'm just concerned about how he will be found."

Dead or alive. Would they find him holed up somewhere, waiting for rescue or hanging by his ankles wrapped in sheets.

"I have to go to work today, I presume Jack is going to call you?" She checked her watch.

"I believe so yes." He nodded.

"Ok…" she looked about the kitchen frowning. "Well, help yourself to anything. It won't be up to your standard I'm sure." She smiled, teasing. "But you're welcome to everything."

He looked up then, meeting her eyes. “Thank you, Alana, you have been very gracious.”

She leaned forward and kissed him on the cheek, a small peck of affection. She giggled then and used her thumb to wipe away the lipstick smudge left behind. He allowed the affection, keeping up appearances.

As she left he heard her say goodbye to the agent posted at the door, a different one from yesterday.

He finished his coffee and went into the guest room, the pup still asleep in the same place Hannibal had left him. He retrieved his tablet from his bag and went into the lounge, leaving the bedroom door ajar.

He found Melissa Brownlie’s details easily enough, she was listed as a staff member at Johns Hopkins, a quick email to the right person and he had her phone number and address. What he needed though was her work schedule.

He called the maternity unit of the hospital, lied about having been treated by her and wanting to thank her in person, charming as ever and he found out she was working tonight, 10pm to 6am. Perfect.

As he hung up the phone it started ringing immediately and he quickly swiped the screen to answer so as not to disturb Adam.

“Hello Jack”

“Doctor Lecter, I hope this isn’t a bad time.” Jack’s voice was thick with tiredness. Hannibal could relate.

“Not at all. How can I help you?”

“We need you to come back to Quantico, make a statement. We need details about Will, what he looks like, age etc.”

Hannibal took a deep breath, let it out in a quiet sigh. “I will have to bring Adam with me.”

“Adam? Oh yes they pup, of course, that’s not a problem. We can give him to Beverly to watch.”

Hannibal frowned. He realized he was holding back a sneer, his top lip retracting over his teeth. Protective. “Adam is very traumatized right now, I doubt he will want to be separated from me.” Or me from him thought Hannibal. “We can try though.”

Jack told Hannibal he could come to his office when he was ready and hung up. Rude, but efficient.

Hannibal pocketed his phone, closed the tablet and went to see what he could make for breakfast in Alana’s kitchen.

———————-

Adam was not having any of it.

On the way to Quantico, driven there by the Agent posted at Alana’s door, Hannibal had requested a quick stop at Walmart to get Adam some shoes. He couldn’t be walking the halls of the FBI in bare feet.

This is what he told the squirming pup now but Adam didn’t care as sat on the floor of the children’s aisle. He kicked Hannibal in the shin, pulled his knees up to his chest and hid his face, humming his monotone hum.

Hannibal sighed, his head tipped back, glaring into the tube lighting of the cheap supermarket.

“Wont put them on huh?” A voice came from behind Adam.

Hannibal’s eyes trailed upwards to the source of the voice. A pretty blonde beta woman stood behind Adam, she had a toddler in a shopping buggy, gurgling away, playing with a set of keys.

“No, he won’t.” He tried not to growl.

She smiled gently at him. “Here.” She grabbed a pair of slippers from the shelf beside herself and reached down over Adam’s head, handing them to Hannibal. They were bright blue with red firetrucks on the sides. “Try these.” The house shoes were soft over the toes and sides, the sole a rubber texture, suitable to wear inside but with enough firmness to wear outside.

“Adam, look, these have fire trucks. Would you like to try them?” Hannibal held them just in front of Adam’s knees. The pup lifted his head slowly, eyeing the proffered slippers.

The boy sighed deeply, as if all the struggles of the world were on his shoulders over a pair of shoes.

He didn’t respond, but he didn’t hide away. Hannibal took it as his agreement to try them and slipped the first one on the boys foot. Then the other as quickly but gently as possible. Adam didn’t protest. He wiggled his toes inside the soft shoe, then poked the firetruck on the side, little lights started to flash on the side where the siren was on the truck and Adam squeaked in delight.

Hannibal stood and breathed a huff of relief. “Thank you.” He said to the woman.

She laughed. “No problem.” She shrugged and started to walk away.

“May I ask your name?” Hannibal called after her.

“Molly.” The woman called back but she kept on walking, her toddler now laughing, she disappeared around the end of the aisle.

Hannibal reached down and pulled the price tag off of the slippers. He wasn’t going to try and remove them to pay.

———————-

At Quantico, Adam sat in the corner of Jack’s office. Hannibal’s iPad in his hands, bulky headphones over his ears, bright blue that Hannibal picked up at Walmart with Adam’s slippers. Every once in a while he would tap said slippers to make them flash then go back to watching his space documentary.

Hannibal was sitting opposite Jack’s desk trying not to appear suspicious over Will’s origins. Jack had the narrow eyed look of a man who was not to be fooled.

“I met him roughly 6 months ago.” He said.

Jack nodded. “I see. He’s been living with you this entire time?”

Hannibal nodded once.

“And he’s pregnant.”

“Yes.”

“And it’s not yours.”

“No.”

“And he’s never been to a doctor.” Jack pushed.

Hannibal shook his head and sighed. “Jack, Will is an agoraphobe. He is terrified of crowds, large open spaces. And I *was* a medical doctor. I provided all his necessary care. If I had thought he was in emergency medical need I would have taken him immediately to a hospital.”

Jack nodded, frowning. “Ok.” He ran his tongue over his bottom lip, pushing it down over his teeth. “Ok.”

“Will is an extremely traumatized Omega. He suffered unimaginable abuse from his alpha. The scars I described to you were not from an accident Jack. His alpha did that.”

“He fought back pretty hard.”

“I said he was abused, not incapable. Time in my care has allowed Will to built his confidence. He is also extremely protective of Adam.”

Jack leans back in his chair, runs his hand down his face. He motions to Adam in the corner with his chin. “Any chance he might be able to identify who took him?”

Hannibal looks over at Adam who has tapped his slippers to make them flash again, a little smile on the pups face. “I am unsure. Will could have hidden him before anyone made it into the house.”

“Legally this is all kinds of screwed up, you realize that?”

“I am aware I am not Adam’s legal guardian. But I hope circumstances here might be able to overlook that.” Hannibal turns to Jack again, back straight, his chin held high. “Are you going to take him away from me Jack?”

“There’s a mess of paperwork when it comes to minors. You’ve got no certificates for him, I’m presuming he’s unregistered?”

“Will told me he gave birth to him alone. In a basement. Where he was chained for most of Adam’s life.”

Jack swallows, Hannibal watches his throat as the words hit him. He nods. “It’ll take a while to sort out any kind of legal documents for him. A long while. An unregistered, disabled pup really would be best taken care of by an actual Doctor, who understands his needs. Don’t you think?”

Hannibal lets out the breath he was holding. “I quite agree.”

———————-

Beverly appears a while later, manila folder in her hand. As she enters Jack’s office Adam’s head snaps up. He drops the tablet, wrenching the headphone from his ears and runs to Hannibal climbing up on his lap.

Hannibal produces his toy firetruck from his pocket and Adam takes it, clenching it in his fist.

Beverly’s steps falter as she strides to Jack’s desk, stopping in the middle of the room.

“Oh, sorry.” She says looking from Jack to Hannibal to Adam.

“It’s alright Miss Katz, Adam is just a little on edge at the moment.” Hannibal begins to stroke Adam’s curls, the pup nuzzling into his collar.

Beverly smiles. “He’s cute. You to Daddy Lecter.” She teases looking him up and down.

Hannibal gives her a chastising look with no heat behind it. She smirks.

“Blood work is back.” She drops the folder on Jack’s desk, he picks it up, eyes scanning the page. “The blood belonged to a beta male. None of it on record. Oh and there were no fingerprints on the weapon, guy must have worn gloves.”

“What about Police records?” Hannibal asks.

“That’s what I ran it against.” She turns to him, hands on her hips.

“I mean police employees.”

Jack closes the folder, the information inside relatively useless. “You think this is related to the welfare checks on the other omegas?”

“In the statements given by the victims families, at least two mentioned they were visited by police officers answering a call about the welfare of the omega in the household. Will and I were similarly visited.”

“It’s a pretty big accusation Doctor Lecter. I would need authorization to get those records.” Jack says, his attention already turned to his laptop, fingers typing away. “Might take a few days to obtain the information.”

Hannibal tries not to let out a sigh, his patience wearing thin. Paperwork. Will's life hangs in the balance because of paperwork. Adam might be taken from him because of damned paperwork.

"Hey erm Doc?" Beverly says. "You think Adam might want a snack?"

She's trying to distract him, he knows. He stands with the pup in his arms, but puts him down anyway. He cant carry him everywhere, even if he doesn't weigh much.

"Jack, if we can take a short break?" Hannibal asks.

Jack just grunts and nods his head, focused on his work.

Hannibal motions to the door to let Beverly lead the way, he picks up the discarded iPad and headphones before they leave. Adam's hand tight in his own.

_____

"Not hungry huh?" Beverly asks, leaning forwards to try and catch Adam's eye as he sits opposite her. "Yeah, I don't think I would be either."

Adam picks the snack bar on the table, the packaging open fully to create a little plate, he pinches the edge, crumbling the oats together.

While Hannibal doesn't like it when people play with their food, his own hunting habits aside, he allows the pup to touch the snack bar as he pleases. He might eat it if he destroys it first.

They’re sat in a corner of the lab at a table. Hannibal’s chair pulled close to Adam’s. He’s not sure who needs the closeness the most.

Beverly takes a sip of her coffee. “He doesn’t say much.”

Hannibal nods. He has a feeling he will need to explain Adam’s particular behavior often. “He’s autistic, no official diagnosis of course, non-verbal. He communicates in his own way.”

Hannibal reaches out and strokes the top of Adam’s head. The pup makes a chirping sound and begins to eat his snack bar. It’s one from the bag Will had stashed them in.

“My little brother is autistic.” Beverly says. “Doesn’t like being touched.” She nods towards Adam. “He doesn’t seem to mind it though.”

“I once watched Will try to dry him after a bath, it was quite like chasing then wrestling an angry mongoose.” Hannibal huffs a little laugh. “Needless to say he locks the bathroom door now.”

Beverly smiles then sobers. The pain in Hannibal’s voice is evident.

This weakness when talking about Will is beginning to make Hannibal feel lesser somehow. Vulnerable. He wants to shake himself. Will has made him feel more deeply than he has in a very long time. He built walls around his heart, stone barricades that until recently have been impenetrable. A fortress constructed after Misha’s murder, maybe even before. Always a strange child, a solemn pup with a serious face only softening once Misha was born and her little fist closed around just one of his own, red faced and screaming but beyond beautiful.

He feels angry. If that’s the right word, he’s not even sure. Angry. Furious even. At himself? At Will. At the person who stole him away. He’s angry that Adam is now looking to him for comfort, for someone to care. And Hannibal is a selfish man, he wants to be selfish. He could waste time, wait for Will’s body to show up, give Adam up for adoption, he’s not his legal guardian anyway. Children’s Services could find him a couple that understand his condition, care for him properly.

Hannibal closes his eyes as his heart rate speeds up, a growl perched under his chin, his skin feels too tight and he wants to be sick. He stands abruptly, his chair scrapping across the floor, Adam squeaks beside him.

“Excuse me.” He mumbles as Beverly looks at him with concern. He turns and leaves the lab through the swinging doors, they flap closed behind him. His brain takes him to the nearest restroom, body on autopilot.

He barely makes it to the nearest stall before he’s gagging, breakfast making a reappearance in the bowl. He bends forward heaving, his breath stuttering. The smell makes him gag again.

He can feel sweat run down his back between his shoulder blades, gather at his nape, across his forehead. He uses a few pieces of toilet tissue to wipe his mouth, flushing the foulness away with a firm push of the lever.

Once out of the stall, he washes his hands then looks up at himself in the mirror. He’s taken aback by what he sees. He looks ghastly, drawn, pale. He has subtle shadows under his eyes from lack of sleep, thank you Adam, and his hair is messy.

He wets his hands again and pushes his hair from his forehead. Then cups his hand under the tap, sips the pooled water and rinses his mouth. He’s straightening his tie when Zeller appears in the doorway, looking concerned.

For some reason Hannibal cant meet his eye. He’s not normally one to avoid the gaze of another but he knows when he looks up he’s going to be met with a look of pity. And he won’t be pitied.

“Hey Doc.” Zeller says quietly, pushing his hands into his jeans pockets, letting the door fall closed behind him as he steps into the restroom proper.

“Mr Zeller.” Hannibal pulls his shirt cuffs down a little, runs his hands down the front of his suit jacket.

“This is normal you know.” Zeller states. “Feeling like this?”

Hannibal looks at him then, his head tilted. “I don’t know what you mean.”

Zeller puffs out a breath. “Bull shit.”

Hannibal frowns.

“Sorry.” Zeller looks down at his shoes for a moment. “But it is. You cant tell me you don’t feel like shit.”

“I must have eaten-“ Hannibal starts.

“Stop it.” Zeller looks up then and takes a step forward, not quite in Hannibal’s personal space but edging on being too close. “You’ll just make it worse for yourself.”

“Mr Zeller if you are implying I am feeling the affect of Bond Sickness I regret to inform you that Mr Graham and myself are not bonded.”

Zeller laughs then. Actually laughs. Hannibal feels his nose scrunch up, his top lip pulling in a sneer.

“Doc, seriously, you don’t need a bite to have a bond. Jack told us Will didn’t have a mating scar on the forms detailing his appearance.”

Hannibal says nothing. He takes a deep breath in letting it out slowly.

“Mr Zeller if you’re quite done.” He moves to step around him but Zeller takes a step to the side blocking his way.

“You changed. I know you don’t realize it but you have. When I met you, months ago, you were kind of… I don’t know… cold.”

Hannibal frowns, his brow furrowing. Zeller holds up his hands placating.

“Now don’t get me wrong, you were polite, charming even. But you’ve changed, you’ve become… passionate. Like you smile and it’s real.” Zeller shakes his head, frustrated with himself. “That little pup out there. He… he’s been looking at you. Every time you move, he’s had his eyes on you. Making sure you’re still there. That’s trust Doc, he trusts you. And I have a feeling trust doesn’t happen easy for him.”

“He ah… he bit me the first time we met.” Hannibal says.

Zeller snorts. “I think he trusts you because Will does. Whatever you did, whatever it is between you and Will? It’s as close to a bond as it can be without a bite. And Adam can feel that. I wouldn’t be surprised he’s feeling exactly the same way as you right now.”

Hannibal looks to the restroom door, realizing he had just walked away from Adam without a word. Left him alone with a stranger. He nods to Zeller who bobs his head back and leaves the rest room.

As he makes his way to the lab once more he can hear Adam screaming. He feels stupid suddenly, he picks up his speed and jogs back into the room, letting the door bang behind him.

Adam is still sitting at the table, his small fists clenched in his hair, tugging painfully. Beverly is sitting quietly opposite him, her hands on the table, not touching or talking. She looks unaffected by the pups screams, maybe a little sad for him. She looks up at Hannibal as he enters the room and stands, smiling at him and leaving the table.

Adam begins rocking back and forth, still clutching his hair.

Hannibal crouches down until he's at Adam's height and gentle takes the boys hands in his, pulling them until they loosen their grip on his soft curls. Adam hasn't stopped screaming, but he now turns to Hannibal as the alpha pulls him towards himself. Hannibal wraps his arms around the crying pup and rises enough to sit in the chair behind himself, seating Adam astride his lap, his small body melting into him as the boy winds his arms around Hannibal's middle.

_____

They leave Quantico not long after. Getting into the car and strapping Adam in had been exhausting, the pup sniffling beside Hannibal in the back seat. He had asked the driver to take him home to retrieve his car.

Before he had left the BAU he asked Jack when they might be able to return home, Jack said it was still an active crime scene and might take a while, but allowed him to be escorted in to fetch more clothes and necessities as long as he didn't touch anything in the foyer or the kitchen. Hannibal had given his word.

The FBI agent that drove them home was the one to open Hannibal's front door and enter the house with him. He left Adam dozing in the back seat of the SUV now parked on his driveway.

It was frustrating to be followed into the house by the Agent, a stern looking Alpha who watched every movement Hannibal made as he walked up the stairs.

Hannibal was desperate to check the basement lock in the pantry but as he was denied entry to the kitchen, the room taped closed with yellow police tape, he couldn't. Instead he was allowed to go upstairs to pack additional items he and Adam needed. He moved swiftly through the rooms, grabbing items as he did, not wanting Adam to wake up alone.

It was only when he was in Will and Adam's room did he slow. Will's scent a welcome reprieve from the smell of the lab, Adam's distress, the annoyed Alpha Agent downstairs and the copper tang to the air of Will's blood.

In this room Will's scent was warm, earthy, relaxed. The sweetness of his dreams held in the fibers of the pillow Hannibal now had pressed to his nose.

Hannibal closed his eyes. The sense memory of touching Will's soft brown curls made the tips of his fingers tingle. He wondered then how the supposed 'bond sickness' was doing to Will, his own fading a little from the pillow he held. His ribs panged, stomach dropping as he thought of Will, sick, hurt, alone again. It had only been one day. Just one day.

The Omega Killer kept his victims for up to eight days before killing them. He had time.

_____-

That night after dinner with Alana, of which he ate some and Adam barely touched his chicken and broccoli, Hannibal and Alana sat in her lounge, glass of wine in hand.

Adam had fallen into a fitful sleep, crying out when Hannibal tried to leave the bed and Hannibal had been forced into waiting until the boy was fully asleep before sneaking out of the room.

The dim light of the television reflected off of the surface of Hannibal's wine, he tilted the glass, letting the blue green hues refract in the curved bowl.

He wasn't sure what Alana was watching, he didn't care either. He let his mind wander to his palace. Stood in the aisle of the Norman chapel in Palermo, the dark wooden pews lining the

tiled floor either side of him, the altar cast in mid afternoon shadow. He was alone, as he always was, he had not placed Will in this room yet. But Will did occupy a few places of his mind palace. The fight they had in the basement took over a room in the west wing, the scent of Will's fury captured in a sand timer, placed high on a shelf. Will's laughter sitting beside it, hidden inside a sea shell, the sound of waves replaced with the throaty chuckle of the omega.

Hannibal excused himself to bed after an hour or so of silence, apologizing for not being good company, Alana chastised him that he wasn't there to entertain her, he was there to feel safe. If sitting in silence was what he needed then she was happy just to sit with him.

At 12pm he opened his suitcase and retrieved Will's pillow from inside, having taken it from his room. He lifted Adam's arm and placed the pillow against the pups body, who immediately pulled it closer to himself, nuzzling the fabric and sighing.

He had redressed earlier into black slacks and matching pullover after coming into the room to 'sleep'.

Checking once more that Adam would not wake, he slipped silently from the room into the hall listening for Alana, he put his ear to her bedroom door as he passed and heard her sleeping soundly within.

He grabbed his coat and checked he had his car keys before heading into the lounge and climbing through the large window beside the television on the far wall. There was a small drop to the ground, the sound muffled by grass as Hannibal landed.

He had opted to park his car in the buildings carpark behind the back of the apartment block, so now as he pulled away from Alana's building, the FBI agent stationed at her front door and the two sitting in the large black SUV across the street didn't see him.

He checked the time on the dashboard. 12.15am. Time to visit Melissa Brownlie.

The Chesapeake Ripper

Chapter Notes

> Hello Gorgeous.
> Missed you. Love you.
> x x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal sits patiently in his car outside the staff exit of the maternity department of Johns Hopkins. He watched as staff members passed each other leaving and starting their shifts, some in their street clothes, some in light pink scrubs.

He knew this was where Melissa was going to exit the building. He had spotted her car in the staff parking bays near where he himself now sat. He's close enough to the exit to see when she leaves but not so she can see him in the darkness of his car.

He waits, in the quiet of the car he can hear only his own breathing and tries to not let his mind wander in his mind palace. He can't lose focus now, even though he has 30 minutes before the end of Melissa's shift to wait.

The clicking of his own blinks is beginning to wind him up and even the sound of his own sigh he lets out at the frustration of his blinking makes him more frustrated.

The nagging feeling in his stomach that he left Adam alone sleeping is distracting him. He's left Adam alone plenty of times, but those times were all with Will. Adam is alone with Alana. Who is more than capable of protecting him if the need arises.

He checks his watch again, then gets annoyed at himself for checking his watch.

He wrinkles his nose and sniffs. When did he become so fidgety?

The door to the staff entrance opens and Hannibal watches as Melissa Brownlie steps into the darkened path from the bright lights inside. She holds the door open for someone entering the building, the bright light of the hall shining on her face for a moment.

She's finished her shift early. This in itself is suspicious enough, but Hannibal can see the way her eyes sweep the carpark nervously. She's clutching her purse to herself, her car keys already in her hand.

Hannibal watches as she goes to her car, unlocks the door, her head turning this way and that scanning the people around her.

She pulls away with a slight squeal of her tires, speeding through the carpark and on to the road leading to Hospital. Hannibal starts his car and follows her, keeping two cars between them as he joins her on the main road.

The drive for 45 minutes and Melissa keeps her speed up until she takes a sharp right turn, the car behind her pressing the horn of their car at her.

Hannibal takes the turn properly, safely indicating his intentions. He finds her again further up the road. She pulls into the back alley of a row of stores and Hannibal drives further on, taking a few right turns to lead him back to the same spot, her car now not in sight.

He parks across the street to the empty stores, low rise buildings with a storefront and two apartments above. This isn't where Melissa lives. He exits the car, his heart thumping in his chest. He clenches his fists to his sides to stop the slight tremor running through him.

Crossing the street he can see that the alley Melissa drove down leads to a few sets of garages. It's poorly lit but Hannibal can make out her car in front of a garage door. The roll top door is open roughly a foot from the ground, dull yellow light shining out from underneath.

He quickly scans the streetlamp, his eyes flickering up to ascertain if he is being watched by any security monitoring. There are no cameras, no open windows on the apartments overlooking the alley. All the windows are dark. No one is watching.

Hannibal picks up his pace, keeping his tread as soft as he can in his haste. All he can think about is Will. He also knows this could be a trap. It's possible Melissa is aware of his intentions to follow her, she could be leading him to the Omega Killer in order to kill him.

He turns his body as he gets closer to the door, pushing himself in line with the garage, his back to the wall. As he passes her car he quickly looks inside to make sure she's not sitting in there waiting for him. It's dark inside, the engine off. He looks up the alley to where he came from making sure there is no one behind him, sweeping his eyes over the hood of the car to the other end, the dead end has a few industrial trash bins, a chain link fence but he is alone.

He inhales, the smell of bleach hits his nose first, turpentine, then soap. The industrial soap used in Hospitals. Under all of that he can smell skin, the stale scent of unwashed skin. And something else Hannibal cant put his finger on, like leather or oil on leather.

He crouches low to the ground, and looks under the door at an angle, hiding his face for as long as he can. From where he is he can see the floor is covered in blue tarp, the far concrete wall has plastic sheeting covering that too.

The space has been designed to protected it from liquid spills. Hannibal takes a quiet inhale now that he is closer hoping to catch Will's scent. He can't. He closes his eyes and lets the breath out slowly, centering himself. Maybe Will isn't here, but Melissa clearly isn't innocent. She's come here for a reason, maybe Will had been here before and she's cleaned the place since. Maybe. Maybe.

Inside is quiet except a constant chatter chatter chatter sound, rhythmic. And a dull sound of a machine, something churning.

Hannibal straightens up, his back to the wall again. He takes his scalpel from his pocket, reaches down and pulls open the door, stepping into the space fully.

Melissa stands with a shriek, her hands flying to her mouth, the chair she was sitting on falling to the side.

Hannibal steps closer, his eyes moving to the table beside her. The sewing machine, the mannequin in the far corner then back to her.

“Well Miss Brownlie, this is all very interesting.” He says calmly.

“You! What are you doing here?!” She shouts, her voice shrill and panicking. Her eyes are wide, her chest heaving. Hannibal sees her hand begin to reach behind herself.

“Ah ah, keep your hands just where they are please.”

Melissa’s expression morphs slowly from fear to anger and her hand suddenly reaches behind her, she grabs a pair of fabric scissors and throws them at Hannibal, narrowly missing his arm, they fly through the open garage door, smashing the window of the passenger seat in the car.

She screams then, her brows furrowed and launches herself at him. Her fury is red hot, her fists have turned into claws as she tries to catch his face.

Hannibal takes another step towards as she runs at him, turning his body at the last moment to miss her furious attack, she turns with him, agile and catches his cheek with her nails, raking through the delicate skin, drawing blood.

Hannibal steps back, further into the garage, their positions reversed.

Melissa lets out another howl and launches herself again, this time aiming low, for Hannibal’s legs, meaning to take him off his feet. He swipes low with the blade and she screeches, falling to the floor, clutching her cheek.

She rolls onto her back looking up at him with disbelief in her eyes, rage and such a narrow focus that Hannibal nearly misses her grab something from under the table now behind and above her.

She swings with it in a low arch aiming for Hannibal's ankle, he steps back just as the hammer in her hand connects with the toe of his shoe.

Hannibal steps back again and suddenly Melissa is on her feet, her eyes beseeching.

"No no!" She shouts, eyes flickering from Hannibal to the mannequin behind him. "Get away from him! Don't touch him you filthy alpha!"

Hannibal doesn't move. The fight has barely affected him but Melissa is suddenly a bundle of nerves. She drops the hammer, her hands wanting to reach out, past Hannibal to the dummy.

"You've been busy Miss Brownlie."

"Just… just please. Don't touch him." She begs.

He tilts his head to the chair laying on the ground, Melissa understanding his intention picks the chair up but instead of righting it to sit down she takes a chance and swings it at Hannibal, hitting him fully on his left arm as he raises it to defend himself, forcing him away from the mannequin, the chair breaks before she can hit him again.

Hannibal grabs her wrist as she lifts the broken chair leg over her head to hit him again, bringing the scalpel to her throat and pushing just a little in the soft skin of her exposed neck.

She gasps and drops the chair leg.

"Very good. Now because you are clearly not going to behave, I must insist on restraining you."

He pulls her wrist down and releases it, pushing the scalpel further into her skin and she whimpers, a thin line of blood now trickling down her neck.

Hannibal takes from his pocket a pair of hand cuffs, opening one link and catches it around her wrist.

“If you wouldn’t mind.”

This time she obeys, and cuffs herself, her wrists now joined with the cool metal of the handcuffs. Hannibal reaches down, his eyes never leaving her face and tightens them, the links clicking a few times and Melissa grimaces as the bands start to pinch her skin.

He puts his hand on her chest, above her breast bone and pushes her until her back meets the opposite wall, then steps away, taking the blade away from her throat.

“Now. Where is Will?” He asks, trying to keep as much emotion out of his voice as he can.

Melissa frowns, her confusion evident. “Who?”

“The omega you and your accomplice to from my home.”

Melissa sniffs, her face grimacing, she uses to the back of her cuffed hand to wipe her nose, sweeping it under her nostrils. “I have no idea what you’re talking about.” She says.

Hannibal watches her. The way she’s standing, holding her shoulders straight but not too high. Her face is filled with anger and something else, something like a lie but not.

“I will ask you one more time, then I will start cutting pieces of you away, but unlike your friend here…” he gestures behind himself. “I will not sew you back together.”

Melissa looks behind him at the mannequin again. She closes her eyes and shudders. When she opens them again some of the fight has left.

“I don’t have him. I never had him.” She shakes her head.

“Who has him?” Hannibal steps towards her, his chin tucked down, his anger finally peering out from behind his mask.

“I don’t know!” She shouts. She shakes her head again, violently. “I don’t know!”

As Hannibal steps closer again she slides down the wall, hitting the floor with a thud. She draws her knees up to her chest and hooks her cuffed arms over them. She looks very small and very young.

The pose is so strikingly like Will that Hannibal has to take a moment to gather his thoughts again.

“I wanted him.” She whispers.

Hannibal doesn’t speak. He waits for her to explain. When the silence feels like forever Hannibal says “Melissa.”

She looks up at him then, tears caught on her lashes, Hannibal can see how beautiful she might have been in another time but he won’t be fooled by crocodile tears.

“I wanted him. He didn’t deserve… why did he get away?! Why not my…” she stutters then, the tears falling free. “None of them deserved what they had. Not when my brother suffered the most.”

“Who are you working with?”

“A guy. An alpha. Works for the police.” She shrugs. “He hates Omegas. Didn’t take much to convince him to help me.” She laughs then, a bitter twisted thing, at odds with the look of resignation on her face. A tear falls into the cut on her cheek, mixing with the blood still wet there and continues down her face, dropping from her jaw.

“His name.”

Melissa sighs. “Merry.”

Hannibal doesn’t feel any delight in being right about Officer Merry. Nothing about tonight has made Hannibal feel anything other than anger. He had hoped. Hoped that Will was here, that he was within his reach.

“He has Will.”

“I don’t know.” Melissa growls. “I wanted him, told him to get him. Merry turns up empty handed said someone else wanted him more. Apparently paid him a lot for the delivery.”

Hannibal growls then and Melissa’s head snaps up to look at him, real fear in her eyes now.

“What… what are you going to do with me?” She whispers, looking from his hand back up to his face.

Hannibal tilts his head and considers.

———————-

Hannibal is showered and dressed in sleepwear, laying awake next to a still sleeping Adam when the call from Jack Crawford comes in. He answers with a muted greeting to not wake

the pup, slipping from the bed and into the hall.

“Doctor Lecter, we found the Omega Killer.’ He hears Jack sigh down the line. “I’m afraid Will isn’t here.”

_____-

He takes his time getting dressed. He chooses a dark maroon window pane suit, with black and grey details, black shirt, silver paisley tie. He makes himself and Alana coffee as he hears her shower. She received the same call from Crawford once he had taken the details down and hung up.

Adam sits at the kitchen island nursing a bowl of cheerios, his hair hanging over his face. The pup sighs and Hannibal sits down beside him on a bar stool.

“You must eat Adam.” Hannibal says quietly as he begins to stroke the pups tangled curls. He won’t let Hannibal brush his hair, or bathe him. Luckily they haven’t been anywhere that would cause the boy to get dirty. He just smells like baby powder, the faint tang of sweat and Will, the pup having wrapped himself around Will’s pillow all night.

Adam finally picks up his spoon and eats a mouthful of cereal, chewing slowly. He quickly puts the spoon down with a clang as Alana walks into the room.

Hannibal looks up and she gives him an apologetic look.

“Sorry.” She mouths. Hannibal shakes his head with a small smile.

“I made you coffee, would you like breakfast?” Hannibal asks standing, ready to cook for Alana.

She sighs and shakes her head. “I have the feeling I don’t want a full stomach for this one.”

“A wise choice.”

He turns to Adam than, the boy having pushed his bowl away with a gentle hand. It had been a challenge this morning to get Adam dressed, the boy pushing away everything he could offer given the small amount of clothing they had with them. In the end he had let Adam wear what he had been wearing for the last two days, chocolate cookie stains and all.

He moved past the pup to retrieve his slippers from the hall and Adam slipped from the stool and followed him. As Hannibal turned to go back into the kitchen where he thought Adam was, the pup bumped into his legs with a little grunt, then proceeded to wrap all four limbs around one leg, his bottom resting on Hannibal’s foot.

Hannibal sighed, prying the boys fierce grip from his trouser leg, now creased.

“Adam, please let go.”

Adam did and Hannibal helped him to stand, brushing a curl from his brow.

“I was only getting your shoes see?” Hannibal held up the offensively bright firetruck slippers.

Adam shook his head, his slightly limp curls flopping about.

“I’m not going to have this conversation again Adam, you need to wear something on your feet when you leave the house.”

Adam wiggled his sock covered toes, drawing Hannibal's eye to them. He crouched down bringing them eye to eye, well, HAnnibal's eye to Adam's forehead as the boy resolutely stared down at his own feet.

"Something more protective than socks." Hannibal took hold of Adam's calf. "Lift please."

With a little tug, Adam shifted his weight to his other leg and allowed Hannibal to put the slipper on his foot. He then lifted the other leg and Hannibal finished the task.

When he stood he saw Alana leaning against the kitchen door frame, a fond look on her face.

He plucked his coat from the hook and slipped it on. "Say nothing."

Alana chuckled and joined them by the front door. "I'm saying nothing!"

They took Hannibal's car, Alana in the passenger seat, Adam in the back, iPad in hand, earphones cradled over his head. Alana had agreed to sit in the car with Adam while Hannibal surveyed the scene.

Hannibal drove, he kept his eyes on the road and listened to the small sounds from Adam in the backseat. Once in a while looking into the rearview mirror to watch him.

Alana gave directions from the sat nav to the garages where Melissa Brownlie's body was found. Jack watched as they pulled in behind a police car, lifting his hand in greeting as Hannibal stepped out of the car thanking Alana as he did.

The alley and garage area was full of police officers, a plastic barrier holding back the growing crowd on the street. The forensics team were standing by the open garage door, Beverly had her hands on her hips saying something to Price who nodded sagely.

In the early light of the day Hannibal could see the dismayed look on some of the officers faces, one of them was sat in the open door of a police cruiser, a sick bag in hand while another talked in calming tones to him, hand on his shoulder.

Jack lifted a barrier of police tape for Hannibal to duck under.

“Thank you for coming Doctor Lecter, I’m sorry it’s not better news.”

“I would rather know than be left in the dark. From the faces of the officers here I gather what you have found is not ideal.”

Jack shook his head and sighed. “Doctor Lecter.” He stopped and turned towards Hannibal, a grim angry expression on his face. “She’s dead, but we think…” He rubbed his eyes. “We think it’s the Chesapeake Ripper.”

Hannibal feigned shock, raising his eyebrows in mute surprise. “Now that is a turn of events.”

“Yeah. God knows how he found her.”

He led Hannibal to the open garage door, Zeller and Beverly greeting him with a nod of the head, their faces somber. Their behavior was fascinating. Hannibal knew the FBI were confounded by The Ripper, by himself, but he never really knew how deeply his kills and displays affected them. When at the scenes of The Omega Killer, they were able to stay jovial, sarcastic quips and friendly banter. But here, with a display from The Ripper on their laps the true hold Hannibal had over them was thrilling.

He let his eyes scan the garage, he knew what he was going to see, as he was the one to do it.

Melissa Brownlie was strung up by her wrists by fishing line attached to hooks in the far corners of the garage until she stood up right against the back wall. Her head was mounted on another hook to hold it up, her eyeless skull facing the garage door. Sewing needles in her mouth pulled her lips into a toothy grin, more fishing wire held that smile in place, the sharp needles had been pulled through her cheeks and blood had run in small rivulets to her chin.

She was naked from the waist up, her long brown hair covering her breasts. Around her hips hung the dried skin of her brother Matthew Brown. The rest of the Matthew skin suit pooled on the floor. The tableau had the affect she was shedding his skin and rising from it triumphant.

Her sewing machine was still on the table, now pulled closer to the middle of the garage, needles and thread lay scattered on the floor, Matthews hand in the machine as though ready to be sewn together, the needle down and thread piercing the skin of his wrist.

As metaphors went this one was pretty simple, but Hannibal knew it would be affective. As he cast his eyes around, Beverly came up beside him clearing her throat.

“Miss Katz.” He greeted with a small polite smile.

“Hey Doc. So… Melissa Brownlie was our killer all along.” She sounded disappointed, her mouth turned down in a frown.

“So it would seem.” He leans forward to look in Melissa’s mouth, inspecting his own work.

As Hannibal straightens he turns and see’s Jack walk into the space, his hands in his pockets, brow furrowed.

“It’s The Ripper.” He states. Hannibal nods.

“Is there anyone at her home?”

Jack shakes his head. “Sent officers there when we realized who she was. They didn’t find anyone. It’s a mess though. I was hoping you could come with us when we wrap up here?” Jack sounds hopeful, his face stern, eyebrows raised. He has a look in his eye that Hannibal is beginning to loath. Pity.

He wants to bite and scratch, pound the face of the next person to presume he is weak. A dumb Alpha missing his omega and cant think straight.

“I am quite able to investigate her home with you Agent Crawford. As long as Doctor Bloom is willing to accompany us to watch Adam.”

Jack can sense something in Hannibal’s tone, even though Hannibal tries to cover it up with politeness. He steps back and nods. “Thank you Doctor Lecter.” He walks out of the garage again, barking orders at the nearest police officer to keep the crowd back and disappears from view.

He turns to Beverly again. “Not all of us are lost kittens without our mate around, Jack should know better.” She states.

Before Hannibal can say that Will is, in fact, not his mate, Beverly is crouching down, her blue gloved hands pinching the skin of the Matthew skin suit, rubbing the texture.

“She must have spent forever drying this. Probably too much, it’s very thin and rough.”

“Taxidermy is a skilled art.” Hannibal says as he crouches beside her, careful with his coat to not touch any of the blood or needles on the floor.

“Parts of it are newer than others, looks like she started with the head and hands, then added more as time went on based on the skin discoloration and stitching.”

“I wonder what drove her to such extremes.” Hannibal ponders aloud. He never did ask Melissa why she did what she did. He doubted she wouldn’t have told him.

“I wanna know if she was working alone. I’ve always said the killer had to be strong to get the bodies in the tree. There’s just no way she could have done it by herself.”

“I agree.” Hannibal says standing up. “Perhaps her home will hold more answers.”

He says goodbye to Beverly and finds Jack by his car, Alana still in the passenger seat, the window rolled down. He can see through the windscreen that Adam is still sitting in the back seat as he had left him.

“Agent Crawford, I doubt there is much more I can do here. Would it be prudent to go to Miss Brownlie’s residence now?”

“Yeah ok.” Jack replies, he turns then and shouts for Price. The beta’s head pops round the opening of the garage frowning. “Anything?”

Price disappears again for a moment then reappears, pulling his gloves off as he strides over to Hannibal’s car.

“Nothing solid. A few prints on the sewing machine, I’m presuming they’re Melissa’s. I can run them back in the lab to be sure.”

Jack nods. “Ok, give them to Zeller to run and go with Doctor Lecter and Doctor Bloom to the Brownlie residence. Baltimore PD said they don’t want to touch the place.”

Prices raises his eyebrows. “Oh ok.” He says cheerfully.

Hannibal watches his retreating form as the man walks back to the garage and starts talking to Zeller, who then lifts his hands exasperated, shaking his head. To which Price shrugs.

“I’ll send Price over in an SUV with another Agent just in case. Wait outside for them if you get there first.” Jack states and then walks away with a polite nod in goodbye.

Alana says goodbye quietly, turning to look at Hannibal as he climbs into the drivers seat of the car, closing the door with a solid *click*.

“Do you think Will is at her home?” Alana asks sheepishly. Her hand folded on her lap, left over right.

“Police told Jack that the house was empty.” He answers, turning the key in the engine, the deep rumble of the car starting up.

As he beings to pull away he hears Jack shouting his name, looking in the rearview mirror he can see Jack pounding after them, waving frantically. He stops and opens the car door ready to get out. Jack puts his hand up stopping him.

“Just got a call. They found someone. Male. Omega. Unconscious but alive, in the basement.”

Hannibal barely hears Alana gasp over the sudden pounding of his heart in his ears.

“Is it Will?” Alana asks, Hannibal unable to make his tongue work.

Jack just shakes his head. “They haven’t ID’d him, said he was beaten up. He’s been taken to Johns Hopkins.”

“Agent Crawford, if I may?” Hannibal asks, his words barely above a whisper.

“Go.” Jack says, tapping the roof of the car. “The house can wait.”

Hannibal slams the driver door closed and pulls out of the alley with a little more urgency than when he pulled in.

His heart hammers in his chest and that tug behind his ribs is almost wrenching him in two, he can feel his ribs squeezing his lungs as he tries to take a deep breath. He realizes he's quite close to panic when a small gentle hand lays on his shoulder.

He looks to the owner who has unbuckled his own seatbelt in the back of the car, put down the iPad, taken off his earphones and is now reaching between the front seats, laying a calming hand on him.

Hannibal could cry if he wasn't worried about driving with clear eyes. He lets go of the steering wheel with his left hand and places it over the delicate fingers on his shoulder. They stay like that all the way to Johns Hopkins.

Chapter End Notes

Incase anyone is interested my twitter is @WinstonsDad
I tweet things. Sometimes.

The House

Chapter Notes

> Hello Gorgeous
> this week we have a special guest appearance. Bet you cant guess who it is...
> Love you.
>
> And I also wanted to say thank you. Thank you for your kind comments and encouragement. I never thought this story would appeal to anyone, honestly.
>
> You've all been amazing. I love each and every one of you.
> WinstonsDad
>
> xxx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Of course the Omega found in Melissa Brownlie's home isn't Will. She said herself that she wanted him but was outbid as it were. And Hannibal knew this. He knew she wasn't lying, yet still, he had hoped she was just being cruel. Lying to him to try and get him to spare her somehow.

As they had arrived at Johns Hopkins, Hannibal had plucked Adam from his seat and carried through the hospital to the ICU having asked at the front desk where the omega was, Jack Crawford had called ahead to let him through.

Now as he stands at the foot of the bed of the poor unfortunate Omega before him he doesn't know if he should be glad he isn't Will.

Laying in the bed, beaten bloody, a broken wrist, fractured ribs, is a man who could be Will's twin. A mop of curly brown hair spread out on the pillow, sea green eyes staring warily at him as he stands with Adam in his arms. The pup's face buried in his neck, his own cheeks slightly flushed from walking so fast.

"I… I'm sorry for disturbing you." Hannibal says quietly.

The man nods a little, blinks slowly. “I’m sorry for not being who you hoped I would be.” He croaks.

Hannibal gives a small nod and leaves the room, pulling the door slightly closed behind himself. Alana finally catches up to him having parked the car in the parking garage after Hannibal had jumped out.

She’s a little breathless as she strides up to him. “Oh…” She steps around him and peers through the little gap in the door. Turning back to him, her brows are furrowed. “I’m sorry Hannibal.”

Hannibal takes a deep fortifying breath. “Shall we inspect the house then?”

As he begins to stride away Alana takes his wrist stopping him. “Hannibal, we don’t need to do this now, the house will be there. Let’s have a coffee?”

Hannibal shakes his head, Adam whimpering a little in his arms as Hannibal’s muscles tense through frustration. “No, I need to do this now. Maybe she had him. Or there could be information about an accomplice.”

He makes to walks away again and she holds his wrist tighter. “You need to process all of this first. Seeing her body, coming to terms with Will not being in the house.” She presses.

He firmly shakes her hand free, using his now free hand to rub Adam’s back to comfort him as the pup continues whimpering.

“Alana. I have no need to ‘process’ the situation. Will is not here. There could be evidence of him in Miss Brownlie’s home.” He doesn’t quite growl out his reply but the words rumble through his chest.

Alana doesn't say anything. She nods and follows him.

———————-

Melissa Brownlie's house is to the south of Baltimore in a quint unassuming suburb. Detached houses sit in pretty unfenced yards. There are children playing with a soccer ball in the street, they stand to the side to let Hannibal drive past them and pull up to the herb outside the two story home.

Attached is a single garage, white painted facings, light blue front door. Little flowers line the curving path up to the small entry porch.

It's all very normal, except for the two police cruisers, the FBI standard black SUV parked on the driveway and neighbors and on lookers being held back by police tape.

Hannibal turns off the engine of the car but doesn't get out. He turns to Alana in the passenger seat who has been silent for the entire drive.

"I apologize for speaking to you the way I did, Alana." He looks at her then and can see the small smile on her face.

She huffs a laugh. "Hannibal, there's nothing to apologize for. I didn't think you were rude. I didn't think anything of it to be honest."

He sighs. "Still, I found my own tone rather harsh, so I am sorry for it."

She lays her hand over his on his thigh. "You're forgiven." She smiles.

He nods once and unbuckles his seat belt, then turns to her again. “Would you mind waiting with Adam please?”

She nods. “Of course. We’ll chat, sing songs, watch cartoons, we go way back.” She flaps her hand at him to go away and he smiles at her humor, appreciating her gentle teasing.

He ducks under the police tape and is met by Jimmy Price who looks as though he’s eaten an entire lemon, his face pinched and upset.

“Hey Doctor Lecter, this…” He gestures to the house as a whole as they stand on the pathway leading to the door. “Is not gonna be an easy job. I’ve already called for reinforcements.”

Price walks ahead of Hannibal and holds the door open for him and Hannibal is immediately assaulted with the smell of distressed omega, blood, and death.

He raises his fist to his mouth and coughs once, clearing his throat. Jimmy pulls out a paper face mask from the bag in his pocket and offers it to Hannibal who takes it gratefully. He’s also handed a pair of blue latex gloves that he puts on.

The house is a labyrinth of discarded trash, stacked cardboard boxes, piles of old newspapers. All the windows shrouded in thick blankets tacked to the frames.

Jimmy holds a torch over his head, high up to cast the beam around them as they slowly navigate their way through to a small room near the back, Hannibal holding his own penlight pointed down at his feet to see around the debris on the floor.

He makes his way through a tight corridor to a door covered in a beaded curtain and looks back at Jimmy who nods his ascent for Hannibal to enter.

In the blacked out room the walls are lined with wire cages. Inside are moths in varying stages of life. Hanging from branches balanced between the wire are chrysalises varying in

shades of brown, crawling among them are caterpillars and fluttering against the wire are the adult moths, their wings beating against the metal in a soft patter.

Against one wall is a bookshelf, the books stacked haphazardly. Inspecting the titles Hannibal can see they are all about insects, but mostly moths. He pulls on the spine of one, The Hawk-moths of the Western Palaearctic A.R. Pittaway. It is well worn, obviously thumbed through many times. Hannibal lets the book fall open in his palm, the pages open to a section on the Deaths-head Hawk Moth. He closes it again and puts it back on the shelf.

In the middle of the space is a table with a chair pulled up to it. Hannibal shines his torch on the contents collected oil it, a sewing machine, needles, thread, and piece of dried skin. Hannibal thinks it's probably human.

Outside of the room he can hear Jack Crawford's voice, he's barking more orders at the officers present to make sure the crowd stays back, he looks to the door and see's Beverly walk in, a mask on, gloves in place.

She catches his eye and raises her eyebrows to which he nods to her.

"Think I can take this blanket down? Let some light in. I've taken photos already." He looks at Beverly.

"Don't see why not." She replies sweeping her torch around the room causing the moths in the wire catches to flutter.

Hannibal shines his torch on the hooks on the wall as Jimmy stretches to pull the blanket from them, he lets is fall and the room is suddenly filled with light, the falling blanket creating a wall of dust. Both Hannibal and Beverly cough, Beverly flapping her hand in front of her face.

With their torches now not occupying their hands Price and Beverly start setting up equipment to collect evidence. Plastic baggies are filled with threads, the piece of skin on the sewing machine. The needles, tweezers and all the other little things that can placed in the evidence boxes.

Hannibal squeezes out of the room, back through the still dark corridor to the front door. More Agents have joined them at the house and the crowd outside has grown. A swathe of news vans has gathered in the street, their camera's flashing.

Jack ducks into the house and the pair make their way back to the moth room, Hannibal guiding with his penlight.

As they enter the room, the beaded curtain now tied up, Jack lets out a little noise of discomfort.

Hannibal looks at him. "Are you all right?"

Jack grunts and looks about the room. "I erm… I don't like bugs."

"Oh yeah!" Price pipes up from where he stands at the table. "I remember that case with the cockroaches gave you the heebie jeebies a few years ago."

"Thank you Jimmy." Jack looks at him sternly but Price ignores him.

"You should've seen them Doctor Lecter, they were huge!" He smiles at Hannibal.

"Yes, Jimmy, thank you." Jack frowns at him, his voice a little louder.

Price smiles and returns to dusting for prints on the sewing machine, humming to himself.

"Maybe you could show me where the Omega was found Agent Crawford?" Hannibal asks offering the man an out.

Jack nods and slides past the beads in the doorway and turns left instead of right in the corridor. Someone has taken down the blankets at the windows, photos of their existence obviously now taken. It helps somewhat, although with the stacks of boxes still block out most of the light.

They twist and turn their way through the corridor and into the kitchen, although the only evidence of it being so is a large refrigerator pushed against the back door and a dirty microwave on a stool next to it. In the middle of the floor is an open hatch leading down to the basement, the smell of distress is stronger in here, the surfaces seem saturated in it.

Bright yellow police tape has been wrapped around the open hatch to alert people to its presence and an officer is standing next to, a mask firmly over his mouth and nose. The man's eyes bright, his brow furrowed.

Jack gestures to the hole and Hannibal leans forward to see the steps depending down into a brightly lit room.

He takes his time of the rickety stairs as they groan under his weight, the creaking wood aged. The basement room is lit with lamps of varying sizes and styles. It creates a surreal affect, like walking through an antique lighting store. They are placed about the room on tables, broken chair, the ground. Their wires hanging from various wall sockets, extension cables.

The walls are made of concrete bricks, damp in the unventilated space. In the centre of the room is an old well but the looks of it, the circular structure built up a few feet with bricks.

"They found him down there, shouting for help." Jack nods to the well.

Peering over the edge Hannibal can see a bucket on a rope, the bottom of the well is dirt, the smell of rotten vegetation and mud rises up to greet him and he pulls back before it can overwhelm him.

"Barbaric." Hannibal states and Jack nods, sighing.

“It’s going to take a while to go through her paperwork, Price said it’s spread all throughout the house. There’s no way she worked alone though.”

Hannibal lifts his lip in a snarl knowing Jack cant see it. The man turns to him anyway, his hands on his hips.

“Have you picked up on his scent?” Jack asks.

Hannibal shakes his head, unable to meet Jack’s eyes. “No. Will has never been here.”

_____-

Hannibal and Jack make their way back out of the basement, though the maze of boxes, to the front entrance to the house, stepping out onto the small wooden porch. Jack growls at the growing spectators barely being held back by police. Hannibal looks past the crowd to his car parked on the opposite curb and his heart lurches in his chest when he realizes it’s empty.

He must have made some sort of sound because Jack puts his hand on his shoulder to get his attention. “It’s ok, Alana said she was going to take Adam for a walk to get him away from the crowd, sorry she said to tell you.”

Hannibal sighs and nods. “I see.”

“I’ll call you if the search turns up anything.”

“Thank you Agent Crawford.” Hannibal pulls off his gloves and puts them in his pocket. He watches Jack go back into the house and walks briskly down the path towards the crowd of news reporters who seem eager at his approach. An officer lifts the tape allowing him to duck underneath and then stays by his side to the sidewalk as cameras flash in his peripheral vision, making his head swim briefly.

He crosses the street, thanking the officer for his escort and takes his phone out of his pocket. He calls Alana and she tells him that she found a park two streets away and gives him rough directs to it, apologizing for not coming in to find him to let him know they weren't going to be in the car.

He brushes it off and starts making his way to where they are, leaving the sound of cameras clicking and people shouting behind him as the street ahead of him empties and begins to fill with the lull of birdsong.

_____

At the park he finds Alana and Adam in a small play-park, fenced off and secure. Adam is climbing the metal steps of a slide, his hands firmly gripping the rail as one foot goes over another making his way to the top. He pauses at the apex of ladder and slide and peers down at the metal decent. Having decided whatever had him stop, Adam carefully sits down, his legs out in front of him and gently pushes himself forward, coming to a slow stop at the bottom. He waits a few moments then stands and begins the process again in his own cautious way.

Hannibal joins Alana who is seated on a bench inside the enclosed play-park, sitting beside her with a sigh.

She leans towards him conspiratorially. "I tried to show him the swings but this seems to be a hit."

He smiles and watches Adam slip down the slide, pause, then begin the task again.

"It's his first time in a play-park." He says, crossing his legs, knee over knee, folding his hands over his knee. "His first time on a slide."

Alana turns to look at him then, her face filled with an emotion Hannibal can only recognize as grief. She blinks then looks back at Adam, her lip trembling a little.

“That poor boy.” She whispers. She gasps then and looks back at Hannibal, her eyes wide. “I’m so sorry! I didn’t think.”

He frown at her, tilting his head. “Whatever for?”

“For showing him the play-park, his first time. You must have wanted to be the one to show him.” She stutters, embarrassed.

Hannibal chuckles. “I’m glad he’s having fun. No need to keep moments of joy from him for the sake of ceremonial traditions. He’s been denied so many things already. Let him be a boy for a while.”

She smiles then, relieved. Her hand drifts to his a little while later as Adam explores the rest of the play-park, finding the swings again and tentatively nudging the seat with a finger, stepping back as the swing drifts back towards him.

Hannibal holds her delicate hand in his own, comforted by her silent presence, her steady heartbeat in her fingertips.

From behind them comes the sound of a barking and shouting. Hannibal and Alana both turn to see a large bellied Alpha, pulling a scruffy brown dog behind him with a chain, shouting at the animal to hurry up.

Hannibal watches Alana stand, her face angry, shoulders pulled back, glaring at the man. He looks back at the Alpha, who is now red in the face with his fury as the man kicks his dog causing it whimper then fall to the ground, cowing, its ears back.

“Hey!” Alana shouts and before Hannibal can grab her she is racing out of the play-park, her hair blowing behind her, towards the Alpha and dog.

Hannibal quickly scans the area to see where Adam is and rushes after Alana. He gets there just as the man steps towards her aggressively while she berates him for hurting the animal. Said dog now hiding behind her legs, glancing up at her.

Hannibal places his hand firmly on her shoulder as she takes a step towards the Alpha, her cheeks flushed, eyes bright, enraged by riotous defense of a helpless animal.

The animal abuser, realizing Hannibal is with her actually steps back, his hands raised, cheeks dark. “Hey man, I wasn’t going to do anything.” He stutters, his large round belly wobbles as he tries to back further away.

“Of course not.” Hannibal says and holds out his hand expectantly.

The Alpha frowns.

“The lead please.” Hannibal bends his fingers back and forth. “Hand it to me please.”

The Alpha dumbly looks down at his own hand where its holding the dogs lead and as he raises it to hand to Hannibal, Hannibal takes the opportunity to grab the Alpha by the wrist, pulling him forwards, stepping behind him and wrenching his arm behind his back, the loud snap of the man’s wrist filling the silence.

He can hear Alana gasp, then the Alpha lets out a squeal of pain, Hannibal lets him fall to the ground. He grabs the dogs lead from the floor and takes Alana’s elbow and starts to walk away back to the play-park.

Alana and the dog don’t move, however. Both rooted to the spot as the Alpha rolls around on the ground cursing at them both, clutching his brown wrist, tears coursing down his flapping jowls.

He gives the lead a firm tug, causing the dog to look up at him apprehensively. “Well?” He asks the animal. The dog’s ears fold back over his skull as he looks at his old master, then

back to Hannibal, deciding that yes, Hannibal was the better option. It springs up and comes to Hannibal's side as Alana seems to shake herself from her shocked stupor and stumbles for a moment, catching up to Hannibal stride.

They walk in silence back to the play-park and Hannibal passes Alana the dog lead. He spies Adam sitting on the floor in front of the swing, using his forehead to push it, then letting it hit him gently before doing it again.

He crouches beside the pup and says his name quietly. Adam stands and puts his hands on Hannibal's shoulders, who then straightens up, pulling the boy up with him to carry.

As they walk back to his car he can feel Alana's anger radiating off of her in waves.

He takes a deep breath, letting it out slowly. "That may have been impulsive." He murmurs.

Alana stops in her tracks, looking at him aghast. "Impulsive?!"

He doesn't stop walking, causing her to trot to catch up to him. "Yes." He answers simply.

Her mouth opens and closes a few times, bobbing like a fish out of water. "I never… in all the time I've known you… that was…" she shakes her head.

Hannibal looks at her from the corner of his eyes, a smirk on his lips. She meets his eyes and begins to laugh.

"I can't believe you." She huffs, pushing some wayward strands of hair from her face.

"What will you name him?" He asks as nonchalantly as possible.

She stops laughing. “What will *I* name him?”

“Yes.”

They stop at the car now, Hannibal opens the back passenger door and folds Adam into his seat, pulling the buckle across his chest. The pup reaches for the iPad and earphones before he even closes the door.

He walks to the drivers side and gets in leaving Alana and the dog on the sidewalk, Alana’s mouth doing that open and close flappy thing again.

After a moment she squares her shoulders and pulls her jacket down by the hem, a motion so like his own he knows what it means. She walks around the back of the car and opens the other passenger door. The dog jumps in without being asked, settling down on the seat, yawning.

He watches her get into the passenger seat, resolutely not looking at him. As he starts the engine she says: “Winston.”

And he smiles.

Chapter End Notes

Awwww its my boy!! Surprise! :3

Day 2

Chapter Notes

Hello Gorgeous
It's been a while huh? well. not too long I hope.
life stuff etc.

This chapter feels lacking to me. It's not great. But it's moving us on to the next one.

Love you
WinstonsDad

Jack Crawford, in all his generosity, allowed the found Omega a full 24 hours before he insisted on interviewing him. He believed Melissa Brownlie didn't work alone. The team agreed and Hannibal had heard the words from Melissa's own lips.

Officer Merry was proving hard to track down. No amount of calls to certain people had given Hannibal any leads. The man just didn't exist outside of his precinct. And he had not been to work for over a week. Hannibal didn't want to cause the station Merry was placed at to get suspicious of his questioning. All they said was Merry was sick, had booked some time off, and that was it. Hannibal had no address, no phone number, no way of finding him.

Jack had asked Hannibal to sit in with the interview with the Omega. And once again Alana had been a god send. He didn't even have to ask her to watch Adam, who was slowly growing comfortable around her. She heard the call from the kitchen, given Hannibal a thermos of coffee and promised to watch Adam and Winston to the best of her ability.

Adam had cried. Then screamed when Hannibal had put his shoes on and not put Adam's slippers on his feet. The pup had sat in the hall, tears on his cheeks, his small fists clenched tightly. It was only after Winston had sat near the boy that Adam had calmed a little, the reassuring press of the dogs fluffy body against his shoulder, turned the boys sobs into little hiccups of distress. Hannibal crouched down, stroking Adam's head, his fingers running through his tangle of curls.

"I will return, Adam. I promise you." He murmured.

Adam didn't respond but Hannibal didn't expect him too. Instead he stood up and gave Alana an apologetic good bye.

"We'll be ok Hannibal." Her voice was strong but she had a little furrow in her brow of worry.

Hannibal leaned over Adam's small body on the floor and pecked Alana on the cheek, she blushed a little as he moved away. "Call me if it all becomes too much."

She nodded and pushed him towards the door.

_____-

The Omega found in Melissa Brownlie's basement looked better than he had when Hannibal first saw him. Still bruised and bandaged, hooked up to an IV and heart monitor. The difference now was the slight glow he had with his Alpha beside him.

Both men in their early 30's by the looks of them. No children present in the room.

The Alpha had been apprehensive as they entered, even after Jack had shown his ID and introduced Hannibal, the man bristled with protectiveness. He sat close to the bed, the omega's hand in his own. Hannibal thought if he could he would drape himself over his mate and growl at them.

"Mr Holloway, thank you for agreeing to talk to us, we understand this is a very fragile time for you." Jack addresses the omega propped up on the bed.

"Didn't give him much of a choice." The other Mr Holloway grumbles from his chair beside the bed.

The omega looks at him as one might a fussy child. “Tim, please. I want to help.” He gestures to the remains seat on the opposite side of the bed with his uninjured hand. “Please Agent Crawford, take a seat.”

Jack pulls the chair a little further away then sits. Hannibal stays near the edge of the room, not wanting to crowd the man.

“I don’t understand what you could be asking.” Tim says, louder this time. “She dead. The woman who did this is dead.”

“We don’t believe she was acting alone.” Hannibal states as he now stands by the hospital window. He looks at Mr Holloway, the dark circles under his eyes. The bruising on his eye socket, lips. He looks away.

“She wasn’t alone.” The omega says, his hand tightening around his mates.

Hannibal’s ribs ached now, down his left side and little towards his kidneys. He had not eaten dinner the night before, nor breakfast this morning, his appetite almost completely gone. He didn’t drink the coffee Alana had made him either. The ache inside made his heart flutter sometimes, palpitations, blood rushing in his ears. Bond Sickness wasn’t deadly, but it was real. Flu like symptoms, loss of appetite, anxiety. Hannibal had them all. He wondered if anyone could smell it on him. The stress hormones bleeding from his skin in waves. The pheromones pumping from his body fizzing in the stale air of the hospital room.

He took a deep breath, realizing he had not been listening to the conversation in the room.

“Paul, do you remember what he looked like?” Jack was asking.

Mr Holloway, Paul, shook his head slowly. “No, not really. It’s all a blur. The guy just walked in. He was wearing a mask, like a balaclava but not wool.”

Tim hunched his shoulders and gripped Paul's hand around his bandage. The action was small, Paul glanced at Tim and sighed.

"I know, I know I should've locked the door."

"In all honesty Mr Holloway, locked door or not, this man would've come into your home anyway." Jack said, his tone calming, assuring.

Paul nods and takes a deep breath. "He was fast, I tried to hit him but he just kept coming at me. I banged my head and… nothing." He lets out a shuddering sigh. "I remember being in a car, but I couldn't see, I think I had a bag or something over my head, it was hard to breathe."

Tim blinks and shakes his head. The sharp scent of anger is edging the other scents of the room out, like a thin fog around the corners of the room, lingering near their ankles.

"Go on." Jack pushes.

"When the car stopped I could hear a woman talking. She was angry, shouting but it was all muffled. Then… he grabbed me… pulled me out of the car." He's trembling now, the memory painful to recall.

Hannibal steps forward, his face passive. "Take your time Mr Holloway. Take a deep breath, another."

Paul gasps in some air, then lets it out slowly, beside him Tim looks like he's about to cry. Hannibal can almost feel their bond, the pain and fear and anger ebbing and flowing between them. An invisible thread, like spiders web, clinging to their skin.

"The ground was damp, I didn't have any shoes on. It felt like stone, or concrete."

"That's good, really good." Jack says "Did you smell anything? Hear anything?"

Paul shakes his head. “No smells, I couldn’t smell anything, my nose… was bleeding.”

Jack nods and raises his eyebrows. “Go on, if you can.” His tone is soft.

“He dragged me, the woman was shouting at him but he said nothing. Just held my arm and forced me to walk. Then he was behind me pushing me, things touched my arms, boxes or paper? I heard a door opening, creaking. Then steps, down, wooden I think, they were making noises as I stepped on them.”

Paul is describing the basement. The steps down under the hatch. Hannibal remembers the lights and the smell of wet dirt.

“He pushed me forwards when I got to the bottom then… then I was falling.” He shudders. “It felt like I was falling forever. I hit my head again. When I woke up I was at the bottom of that well. I pulled off the hood, it was hard, my arm…”

“You never heard his voice? Saw his face?” Hannibal asks, he’s come closer now needing to confirm it is Merry and not someone else working with Melissa.

“No, I don’t know if he was around but I only saw her.” He licks his lips, tongues the cut there. Tim reaches up and smooths his cheeks where tears had started to fall.

“Thank you Mr Holloway.” Jack says as he stands. “If it’s ok I’m going to have an Agent come and take a full statement from you. If you remember any other details please don’t hesitate to contact me.” He hands over a card he pulled from his pocket to Tim Holloway, the man nods and puts it on the side table.

“Thank you for your time.” Hannibal says.

They begin to make their way to the door when Paul says “Oh! Wait there was something.”

Both men turn to look at him.

“There was a sound, when I was already out of the car, it was quiet but it sounded like a scanner? Like a police radio, just for a second, it buzzed and there was a voice.”

“That’s very helpful, Thank you.” Jack says again and both he and Hannibal say their goodbyes, leaving the pair alone in the room.

As Hannibal turns to close the door he can see Tim has abandoned his chair and is climbing up onto the hospital bed next to his omega, cuddling beside him, stroking his hair, saying something quietly. His stomach twists uncomfortably but before he lets the door go Paul calls his name.

“Doctor Lecter?”

Hannibal opens the door slightly looking in, his eyebrows raised.

“I hope you find him.” Paul croaks, the tears are back, he doesn’t brush them away.

Hannibal blinks, the tug under his ribs becoming painful again. “Thank you.” He says and lets the door fall closed.

_____

Back at Quantico Melissa Brownlie’s body has been autopsied. She was a physically average beta woman. No visible illness or brain abnormality. Strong but not overly so, healthy, average weight for her height.

There are no outward signs that she was driven to kidnap and murder eight people. And now that she's dead there is only speculation as to what caused her to do the things she did.

Hannibal stands to the side of the autopsy table as he listens to Beverly and Zeller debate her motivations, running idea and hypothesis together to create a whole picture. But it will never be whole without Melissa telling them herself.

The skin suit or Matthew Brown, or what there is left of it, lays on an adjacent table. It looks surreal, deflated. Like the husk of a cicada. The skin is discolored in patches where it was stored, probably in a freezer until Melissa could sew it together. There are no feet, the legs end at the knee, the hands are in a plastic baggy at the end of the table.

"She got better over time." Price says as he comes up to stand beside Hannibal looking down at the suit.

Hannibal looks up at him.

"With the skin, stripping it of flesh and tanning the hide so to speak." Price rocks back on his heels, his hands behind his back. "You can see where she started and where she got to." He points to the greenish pieces of skin, then the paler pinker bits.

"She was honing her craft." Hannibal says in agreement.

"She was coo coo bananas." Zeller pipes up, turning to the table. "I mean, even if she didn't kill her brother, she still chopped him up, froze him, then defrosted him bit by bit, cut off his skin then made a suit out of it."

"Did you find the rest of him?" Hannibal asks indicating the missing shins, feet and forearms.

"Nope, could've been her first tries that didn't work." Beverly answers frowning.

Hannibal hums. “And there’s no evidence yet of who her accomplice is?”

“No.” Zeller grunts. “No fingerprints inside the house or the garage that aren’t hers. At the bottom of the well were tons of fingerprints, but only of the omega’s trapped there.”

There is a beat of somber silence as they understand the implications of the fingerprints staining the walls of the Well. The omega's trapped there, trying to claw their way out, trying to climb those thick slippery stones to no avail, waiting to die.

After a moment, Price giggles a little behind his hand. “So funny watching you climb down there. Then back out again.”

Zeller puffs out a breath. “Yeah it was great for my claustrophobia.” He mumbles, returning to his desk.

Hannibal’s phone buzzes in his pocket and he takes it out. Alana’s name is flashing on the screen. He answers as he’s walking out of the lab, to anxious for social graces and lets the doors fall closed behind him.

“Alana?” He tries to keep his voice calm.

“Don’t worry Hannibal, we’re just checking in. Everyone is fine.”

He lets out a breath and laughs softly. “My apologies.”

“Accepted.” She laughs. “I swear we’re fine, we’re a little damp, we gave Winston a bath.”

“I see. Not a fan?”

She laughs again “Adam decided he wanted one too. At the same time…”

Hannibal smiles at the image created in his mind of Adam striping himself of clothing and wordlessly climbing in beside the excitable dog.

“Ah, I hope no one was hurt.”

“No, no.. I was just surprised and I don’t think I’ve ever seen my bathroom ceiling wet.”

The laugh together and Alana promises to try and get Adam to eat before they take the dog for a walk, if Adam agrees. They say goodbyes and end the call.

Hannibal rests his back against the wall outside of the lab and closes his eyes. Officer Merry’s face appears in his minds eye. His brain cunjours up the image of his hands wrapped around Will’s throat and he gasps in a breath, opening his eyes to cut off the unwanted vision. His pulse quickens and the feeling under his ribs throbs along with it. Hannibal puts his hand to his stomach, gripping the material in his fist.

Zeller steps though the lab door, opens his mouth to say something then stops.

“Mr Zeller, you keep finding me in rather unprecedented moments.” Hannibal mutters, straightening up and smoothing down his jackets and tie. Comforted by the silky smooth fabric under his hand, the repetitive motion a calming one.

“Errrr, yeah.” Zeller says. “It’s just, we found a finger print that doesn’t belong to Melissa or any of the victims. Thought you would want to come and look.” He jerks his thumb over his shoulder and Hannibal motions for him to go first.

———————-

Hannibal watches Price frown at his computer screen. The print doesn't match anything the FBI have on file.

Jack had come in at some point while running the print. His smoky Alpha scent filing the lab.

"We'll need to check it with Police files, including the staff." Jack says, his hands on his hips.

Hannibal takes his opportunity. "A witness mentioned the name Officer Merry. He could be more involved than just doing welfare checks."

Jack nods and points at Price. "Check his first."

Price nods and scratches his neck, the action looking like an aborted motion to salut. "Yes Sir."

Jack looks at Hannibal and tilts his head to the side, directing Hannibal to the edge of the lab. They walk together to the side of the room and Jack faces him.

"How are you Doctor Lecter?"

Hannibal rolls his shoulder back. "I am feeling a little impatient to find Will, Agent Crawford."

Jack nods and puffs out a lungful of air. "Yeah, yeah of course." His tone sincere. "I'm sorry we haven't found him yet. But I have a feeling this is all going to lead you to a dead end. He wasn't taken by Melissa."

Hannibal nods and his eyes stray back to Price as he taps away on his computer, the sound of the keyboard resonating in the quiet space.

“It would seem so.”

“I hate to ask this Doctor, I know you’re someone who isn’t likely to make enemies, but do you know any reason why someone would target you?”

Hannibal’s eyes snap back to Jack. “I am not one for feuds, Agent Crawford. And I have spent a fair few hours pondering the same question. There is no one I can think of.”

Except, except Mason Verger. But Hannibal can’t tell him the reasons behind it. He has no proof except Will’s word that he was purchased by Mason. And Mason is a very rich man, with societal connections and friends in high places that could crush Jack’s job right on top of him. Or kill him, cover up the evidence. There’s not a judge in Baltimore that would take on a case against Mason Verger and with no evidence there will be no warrant. And if Mason knew the FBI were watching him and he did have Will it’s quite possible he would kill him, or hide him away never to be found again.

Not to mention Hannibal already made that call. Using someone who owed him a favor he currently has Mason under private investigation. The man’s every movement is being compiled in a detailed journal as they speak.

“Could it be one of Will’s old owners?” Jack asks.

“His first owner died of old age, he was then passed from person to person, he never knew their names. When I found him and offered him help, the Alpha that had him and Adam practically gave him to me. Adam wasn’t his pup and said they were a burden.”

Jack grimaces, his brown furrowed. “Might be worth chasing him down though, he could have changed his mind, left Adam with you.”

“It was not the impression I got from him but yes I could find his details.”

Jack nods as Price lets out an “Ah ha!”. Both men turn to see a triumphant smile on his face. “Officer John Merry of the Baltimore PD come on down!” His head gives a little wiggle.

“Got an address?” Jack barks, his scent becoming stronger, like leather and pine.

“Yep!” Nods Price excitedly.

Jack turns to Hannibal, his eyebrows raised. “Would you like to come with us Doctor?”

Hannibal has already pulled on his coat, waiting patiently by the lab door.

Running out of Time

Chapter Notes

hello gorgeous
bit of a short chapter this time. Sorry not sorry.
Although I am sorry for any mistakes you find, this chapter has been bursting out of me and I needed to post it.
Love you x

The ride over to John Merry's home is neither short nor long, but Hannibal can't feel any of it. Theres a thrumming pulse under his skin that is making his finger tips tingle. His ribs are aching on both sides of his chest now, constricting his breathing. The car is silent except for Jack barking orders over his phone to get Agents in the best possible places around the house in case Merry decides to bolt.

Jack's knee is bouncing on the accelerator pedal, his fingers tapping on the steering wheel. Hannibal has never seen Jack so hyped up and he know's it's not for the chance to find Will, its his own bloodlust to find Merry, possibly have to shoot him, bring his own brand of justice.

As they pull up to the house the street is empty, black SUV's filled with FBI agents are parked streets away where they cant be seen from the windows.

The house is dark, small, a terraced house in a block of other small houses. Nothing stands out about them, nondescript. No lights are on, the curtains are closed. The short flight of steps leading to the front door is narrow forcing Jack and the FBI agent with him to go in single file.

Hannibal stays back in the SUV much to his chagrin. The buzzing in his veins is beginning to reach a crescendo and he tries to calm himself with deep breathing, in through the nose, out through the mouth. Beverly is beside him in the back seat, her eyes focused on Jack in the doorway.

After a count of three Jack tries the door, it's locked. He steps back and allows another Agent, with an Enforcer. Two hits the door is open, kicked wide by Jack who is once again back in the lead with his shot gun raised. If Hannibal were feeling like himself he would scoff at the Alpha's use of such a weapon, his contemporaries armed with smaller hand guns.

The next few moments are filled with shouting, Agents moving in a rush, their bodies primed for a fight. When Jack exits, his shotgun by his side, Hannibal knows that Merry isn't there.

He exits the vehicle and crosses the street. Jack is loudly ordering the Agents about, set up a perimeter, search every room, he wants evidence. He shakes his head as he makes eye contact with Hannibal.

"Merry isn't here."

Hannibal looks up at the one story house. "With Melissa Brownlie's death in the news, it's probable he's gone into hiding."

A tall, blond Alpha Agent skips down the steps and stands beside Hannibal, he looks pensive, his hands restless. "The house is empty Sir."

"Spit it out Agent." Jack growls.

"There's a room Sir, you might want to look at it." The Agent says and steps out of the way.

Jack starts towards the door then turns back to Hannibal. "Doctor Lecter, your incite would be beneficial, if you wouldn't mind?"

Hannibal nods to the Agent and follows Jack up to the front door.

———————-

The scent is overpowering before they make it up to the bedroom on the second floor. Jack pulls out a paper mask and offers one to Hannibal who wonders if paper masks and latex gloves are just staple items in all FBI agents pockets.

He pulls the elastics over his ears and fixes the mask on the bridge of his nose. It only blocks out a little of the smell.

Hannibal can only liken the scent to the cloying scent of sour apples. It's distinctly omegan.

As they take each step up with trepidation, Hannibal takes in the scene. Family photos line the walls in the staircase. He suspects they are of Merry and his parents. A solemn faced child in the arms of his mother, neither smiling. The other figure in the images must be his father, the man is tall, broad, a frown on his face in every image. As the pictures continue, the boy in the them growing taller in every one, his parents become further and further away from each other, and then further away from the boy, now a teenager between them. The last image is of just an old woman, Merry's mother. She looks frail and grey. Her eyes are closed as she sits in a rocking chair facing a window. Hannibal recognizes the view outside as the street he has just come from.

They climb the remaining stairs and turn into the room to the right of the short dark hallway. The room itself stinks of wet earth, bitter sour apples, blood and semen.

And Will.

Hannibal rips his mask off and takes in a sucking breath, filling his lungs with the scent of Will. He chokes on the other smells as they too fill his lungs.

Jack puts a hand on his shoulder as Hannibal bends forwards, coughing. "Doctor Lecter?"

Hannibal gasps in another breath and then fumbles with his mask to put it on again. He holds up his hand. "I'm… Will was here."

He straightens, his head swimming for a moment, the edges of his vision greying slightly. He closes his eyes.

Jack nods, a stern solemn expression on his face.

Hannibal sways where he stands for a second, his fists clenched by his sides. He steps further into the room, his eyes scanning the small space.

The bed is pushed into the corner, bare mattress covered in old and new stains, blood being the most prominent. The floor is tacky in places from drying blood. On the bedposts are chains wrapped around them, a padlock dangling to the floor.

The window is barred with metal rods, the glass itself has a sheet stapled to the frame. There is a chair in the opposite corner to the bed. On the chair is a length of rope coiled neatly.

The plaster walls are bare, holes pucker the surface, impact dents along parts of it.

The air is oppressive, thick and cloying and Hannibal turns, he can't be in here any more. He leaves Jack standing in the middle of the room with his hands on his hips.

He strides down the stairs towards the front door, forcing himself past the shoulders of FBI agents still searching the other rooms. The space is so small he clips the shoulder of one Agent who looks as though he's about to object when they make eye contact and Agent just moves to the side to let Hannibal through. Once outside he marches across the street to the SUV Jack drove and rips off his mask, his mouth open trying to fill his lung with clean out, expel out the scent of Will's blood, Will's fear, Will's pain.

He leans back against the side of the vehicle, his head tipped back, eyes closed. The fine hairs on his skin feel like their standing on end. The scent of that room cling to the hairs inside his nose, the back of his throat. He keeps swinging internally, like a pendulum, between angry and terrified. If he holds his breath he can feel his body sway in time with the emotions, left… right… left… right….

He hears his name said from far away. Like a whisper and when he opens his eyes he's standing in a large sunny room, the haze of the sunbeams cast across the shining floor. As he cast's his eyes about, from the shadows appear rows of pews lining the sides of the aisle and he's in the Norman chapel in Palermo, the alter large at the end of the room.

Standing with his back to the aisle is Will, he's wearing grey sweatpants, a white T-shirt. He has his hands hanging limply by his sides, relaxed. Hannibal can see the slight tension in his shoulder though, the muscles shift with each inhale.

Hannibal tires to take a step towards him but his feet won't move, he can't lift them. He looks down and he can see his own bare feet sinking into thick dark mud. He tires to pull his right leg up first, then his left but both are stuck fast, the clay like muck holding his feet fast up to his ankles. He wants to cry out but doesn't. His mouth won't work, his tongue heavy and stuck to the roof of his mouth. He's never felt like this in his own mind palace before.

Will turns and Hannibal can see he's frowning, his brow creased. The sun makes his hair shine, creating a halo around his messy curls, the ringlets gleaming. The blue of his eyes is striking, almost luminous.

"You're running out of time, Hannibal." Will whispers gently. The sound echos around the corners of the room, moving like a wraith cloaked in darkness, gaining volume until his name is the loudest, swirling about his head and he covers his ears, silently screaming into the brightly lit chapel.

"Hannibal!"

Hannibal opens his eyes and gasps in a breath. Turning towards the sound of his name he see's Beverly standing beside him, her face full on concern. She crosses her arms and pops a hip out, a defensive stance Hannibal notes.

"I'm sorry Doctor Lecter, I thought you'd passed out on your feet. You wouldn't answer me."

Over her shoulder Hannibal can see Zeller a few meters away, standing by another SUV watching them, his shoulders tense, his eyes narrowed.

Hannibal pushes himself off of the car and pulls his shoulders back, straightening his posture. He moves to smooth down his suit jacket and stops himself. “I apologize Miss Katz. I seem to be quite affected by today’s events.”

“No shit.” She replies her one eyebrow arched on her forehead.

“I’m quite alright I assure you.” It sounds weak, even to his own ears.

“You want me to get someone to drive you home? Or Doctor Blooms?”

“No, I would like to stay and help if I can.” He can’t quite meet her eyes. He doesn’t want to see the pity, the sympathy.

Instead he stares resolutely at the door.

Beverly nods and walks back to Zeller, who Hannibal can see in his periphery is still watching them both.

Behind the headboard of the bed, carved into the wall was the letter W. Hannibal stares at it until his eye’s become dry and he’s forced to blink. The forensic team had photographed and catalogued the room before pulling the bed away from the wall to see if anything had fallen behind it. They had stopped searching and called Jack upstairs, Hannibal behind him as requested.

Jack and Hannibal had been downstairs looking through a filing cabinet to see if Merry had any documents regarding possible properties he could have relocated too. Merry's Lieutenant from his depatartment had been called to the house. A short, frightfully angry Alpha who Hannibal wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley, had marched into the house, outraged that one of his own had been involved in a crime being investigated by the FBI. His assistance had been outstanding, answering Jack's questions, helping in the search for evidence.

While Hannibal had his hands full with bills from various utility companies, Beverly came and got Jack. The two went back upstairs and then Beverly had returned to ask Hannibal to follow her.

So now Hannibal stood in the blood stained room that held Will captive, staring at the pock marked wall, where the wonky scratched letter stood out starkly against the bare plaster.

W. For Will.

Hannibal is aware of the voices around him but they muffle into one droning sound as his eyes trace over and over again the points and dips of the initial. Up and down, up and down and up.

He hears Beverly confirm for Jack that yes, it's a new mark, the dust along the skirting board and paleness of the plaster underneath confirm it.

Hannibal breaks his gaze to look around the room one last time before he nods to Jack and walks out again, calmer this time, heads back downstairs to resume reading Merry's documents.

Jack joins him a few minutes later, his face drawn into a frown.

———————-

When he returns to Alana's house it's late. Jack drove him there instead of back to Quantico with the rest of the team, their work not done even at the late hour. Hannibal had offered to join them but the slope of his shoulders and feint dark marks under his eyes had betrayed his exhaustion. Holding himself together for the rest of the day had taken it's toll on Hannibal's well being. He had declined food, although he would have done anyway when offered a subway sandwich, as he still did not have an appetite. He supplemented his nutrition with coffee and water, his inner doctor annoyed at himself for not nourishing his body the way it needs. It had left him shaky and tired.

More frustrating than not being able to eat was the lack of evidence they had found in Merry's home. There were no other properties that Merry could be hiding in. No car receipts for secondary vehicles that could be traced. The next step for the team was to interview other Police Officers and Merry's Partner, Officer Raymond tomorrow. Hannibal knew the likelihood of them sharing anything helpful was slim. He had been surprised by the over exuberant assistance of Merry's Lieutenant, the man practically pulling the walls down to help with the investigation, maybe too helpful in Hannibal's opinion.

When the SUV pulls up at Alana's house he thanks the Agent for driving him and exits the car. In his exhaustion he doesn't notice the absence of the FBI agent that was supposed to be on guard.

It's only when he walks into the Hall, his coat halfway off his shoulders does he realize the lights are all out. He slips off his coat silently and takes the scalpel from his pocket as he does. He steps back out of the front door and notices the FBI agent is gone.

He quietly reenters the house, silently padding down the short hall to the kitchen, reaches around the door frame for the light switch, it clicks but doesn't come on. Now would be the time to call Jack he thinks distantly, but his need to find Adam is paramount.

His eyes quickly scan the room, its empty. Nothing is disturbed, nothing broken or over turned. He briefly wonders if the power is out in the rest of the neighborhood, maybe the FBI agent at the door had escorted Adam and Alana to Quantico. He pulls his phone from his pocket, the light shining bright in the darkened hallway. No missed calls. Alana would have alerted him if she and Adam were not going to be there when he returned. He locks the screen and puts the phone back into his pocket.

He continues down the hall to the lounge, his breath hitching when he see's Alana.

She sitting on a dining chair, her arms tied behind her back, a length of fabric around her head as a blindfold, another over her mouth, forcing her jaw open and knotted behind to form a gag. Her ankles are tied to the legs of the chair, her feet bare. She's been placed in the centre of the room as bait. Hannibal doesn't take it. He stays just outside the door, eyes flicking from wall to wall, shadowed corner to shadowed corner. The room appears empty.

As he takes one small step over the threshold, and a man appears to his left wielding a cattle prod. Hannibal turns as the man strikes out, aiming for his ribs.

He pivots on his heel and stabs the scalpel down into the mans thigh and he cries out in pain, dropping the cattle prod to grasp at his injured leg.

As Hannibal backs into the room another man appears from the right, having been hiding behind a cabinet. He slashes at Hannibal with a knife and Hannibal raises his arm blocking the attack, he punches the man in the throat causing him to drop to his knees.

Before Hannibal can look for anyone else he feels a sharp pain on the back of his head and drops to the floor, another man moves to stand in front of him. He looks up as the man swings again, striking Hannibal in the temple and the world goes black.

Pigs.

Chapter Notes

Hellllooooo
I know lots of you guessed this already. Haha yeah its kind of predictable. But this is my first fan fic and I drained my creative resources with Melissa Brownlie so....

Enjoy kids!

Love you x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Hannibal comes too his nose is filled with the scent of animals, shit and hay. The scent of damp wood, cold stones floors and sweat linger under the other smells. He cracks his eyes open, lids heavy from being unconscious for unknown amount of time. His temple throbs with his heartbeat from the strike he received in Alana's living room.

He can feel rope around his wrists although he cannot see them, tied behind his back and pulled up forcing his back into a bow. He's on his knees, the cold seeping into his shins and the tops of his feet. Around his neck is a leather collar, it smells of blood.

Cold air rushes over his body and Hannibal realizes he's naked. When he stretches his neck up to look around it pulls on the rope either side of the collar tied to metal rings on the floor, making his back arch more, his muscles straining.

He can see he's in a pen and by the sounds around him, it's a pig pen.

Mason.

He can feel a growl begin deep in his chest.

He hears the men approaching before they enter the building. Heavy steps and fainter stumbling ones.

His nostrils flare when he catches the woody, sweet patchouli scent of Will and his heart thuds harder in his chest. Will.

His eyes fall closed as the barn door is heaved open, the footfalls become louder.

He can hear Will panting, his faltering steps, half dragged, half stumbling.

He keeps his eyes closed as the pen door is opened, the wood squeaking on its hinges. The ropes tying the leather collar on his neck are loosened and he pulled himself up, sitting on his haunches, his arms still tied behind him, the rope once more pulled taunt to keep him in place.

He wants his eyes to fall on Will when he opens them and listens as they maneuver the omega to the side of the area in front of where he's imprisoned. He wants his vision to be filled with Will, to look upon him and let Will know that he loves him. Of course he loves him.

"Doctor Lecter!" Mason's crazed voice rings out. "Good of you to wake up and join the party!"

Hannibal opens his eyes again, focus shifted to where he believes Will is being held. He sucks in a deep breath as his eyes catch Will's and he pushes all that love, all that heartache, all that passion he feels for the man into his eye contact. It only lasts for a second as Will's eyes widen then Mason steps into his eye line blocking Will from view.

"Don't! Don't look at my toys Doctor Lecter, I did tell you I don't like sharing." Mason practically screeches.

As Mason steps closer to Hannibal, his eyes traveling up and down his prone form, Hannibal can see John Merry standing near the entrance to the barn, he's sporting a black eye and looks at Hannibal with disgust.

Hannibal has never been shy of his body, either in clothes or out of them.

"I can see why Willy boy here would be interested in you." He leers.

Hannibal looks up at Mason, a sneer on his lip.

"But you see the problem I'm having is why you thought you could play with what's mine in the first place." Mason gives a small pathetic growl.

"As I was to understand it," Hannibal clears his throat. "You sold Will. He was no longer your property."

Mason gives an exaggerated sigh. "Ah yes that." He turns then, sauntering over to Will who is being held by two large beta men by the tops of his arms even though he's not struggling.

"I was upset you see. After he killed my sister I didn't really want him around."

Will's eyes widen, Mason pinches Will's cheek, pulling on it forcefully, he moves Will's head with his grip back and forth then stops pinching him and slaps his cheek. The sound resonates in the barn. Will closes his eyes with the force of the hit and doesn't open them again. When Mason steps away Hannibal can see how red Will's cheek is. He then takes in the rest of Will's appearance. His eye is blackened, his lip split but scabbed. He has a bruise to his temple. Will has been missing for three days, the bruises are still fresh. Will's knuckles are split on both hands, he's wearing the same t-shirt and sweat pants he wore at Hannibal's, there are blood stains on both garments, the blood creating brown patches. There are ligature marks on his wrists from being tied up with either handcuffs or rope.

Will is barefoot and there are red marks on the tops of his feet. Scratches on his bare forearms and finger bruises on his biceps, the grip on his arms by the guards holding him now no doubt creating more.

Pride and pain flood Hannibal's chest, Will is hurt but obviously he's fought back. Vicious, brave man.

"Your sister fell in a pig pen Mason, was Will the one to push her?" Hannibal asks, his eyes finally following the loon pacing in front of the pen he's in.

Mason shakes his head wildly, his hair whipping about his head. "No no, you've got it wrong Doctor Lecter. She didn't fall into anything. That was just you know…" he flaps his hand about himself. "A story."

Hannibal doesn't say anything. Mason is a narcissist, a sadist, completely utterly insane. He'll tell Hannibal whatever he wants, even if Hannibal doesn't ask him.

"Margot… took care of Will. She was kind to him. And he killed her for it. Didn't you Willy!"

Will isn't moving, he doesn't answer Mason, his head is down, hair falling over his brow, eyes closed. He looks resigned. Hannibal hopes he hasn't given up on him, hasn't given up on himself.

Mason moves beside Will and grabs a handful of his hair, wrenching his head up. Will lets out an involuntary whimper.

"Answer me Will!" Mason gives Will's hair another painful tug.

"Thats not what happened and you know it." Will growls from behind clenched teeth, his eyes screwed shut. "I didn't kill her."

“No Will, tell the truth. You killed her because she got in your way.” He lets Will’s hair go and Will’s head flops forward again.

Mason walks up to the pen holding Hannibal and crouches down, he sneers at the dirt surrounding him and is careful not to touch the ground. Hannibal looks away from Will’s dejected form and looks Mason in the eyes.

“You see Doc, Will here went and got himself pregnant. And you know, I couldn’t tell if it was mine or that other omega I had.” He clicks his fingers swirling his hand in front of him. “What was his name again Will?’

“Matthew.” Hannibal answers. Mason grins, his teeth too sharp.

“Yeah little Matty. He and Will were you know… fucking.”

Will’s head rises sharply. “No… no we…”

Mason looks over his shoulder from his position on the floor. “It’s ok Willy, I forgive you.” He turns back to Hannibal. “He was kind of cute. Well, for a psycho. Heard his sister killed all those omegas, guess it ran in the family.”

Hannibal hears Will growl quietly. Mason’s smile drops and his face becomes blank as he rights himself, he tugs on his jacket sleeves and turns toward Will nodding to Merry, who now approaches Will, his lip curled up in pleasure.

The men holding Will give him a hard shake and Merry back hands Will across the face. The sound is a dull thud and Will’s legs buckle. The guards take the extra weight of Will being slack in their grip until the omega can get his feet back under himself again. Merry steps back, his grin is almost feral.

Mason turns back to Hannibal and stands over him, looking down his nose, his nostrils flaring. “Willy kept it so secret. Hiding under blankets, sitting down, all that silly stuff to hide his cute little bump. But I saw it and you know Doc, I felt nothing for it. I knew it wasn’t mine. So…”

He crouches down to Hannibal’s level again and pushes his uneven fringe from his forehead. “I might have been a bit rough with him after… just a bit but you know what its like Doctor Lecter, sometimes those alpha urges just make you hurt them a bit more than maybe you should.”

Hannibal stays quiet. He won’t feed into Mason’s cruelty. He refuses to acknowledge his brutality as Mason would take it as him agreeing. Instead he tilts his head and tries to steady his breathing. Focusing on the in and out of the air in his lungs.

“I tell you the thing that came out of him, phew it was a mess.” Mason laughs far too hard, his eyes glinting in the dull barn light. “But!” He stands again and smooths down the front of his obnoxious suit. “This time I’m willing to let it go all the way Willy.”

Will begins to shake his head. He’s positively vibrating with fear, the scent of it now overwhelming all the other smells of the barn.

“You’re going to give me an heir Will.”

Mason turns then and motions for the guard to Will’s right to move out of the way, Will slumps slightly without the man holding him up and Mason wraps his arm around Will’s shoulder, high up near his neck, the hold possessive and hard.

“It’ll be yours and mine, well, mostly mine. And it won’t be like that thing Margot and Matty dragged out of you. Did he tell you about Doctor Lecter?”

Hannibal takes in a deep breath, the scent of Will’s fear fueling his calm. Calm for Will, calm for himself.

“He told me he had a daughter.” Hannibal answers, his lips in a firm line.

Mason laughs cruelly “Oh that’s what it was? Couldn’t tell to be honest, all its insides out. Small weak thing. It was barely human, monstrous! It was better off with the pigs Willy.” He tightens his arm around Will’s shoulders and Will lets out a quiet whimper.

“And sadly that’s why Margot died isn’t it? Trying to give it to me but you wouldn’t listen. You know for an omega Margot was quite…” He taps his forehead with his other hand. “She was clever dear Margot. Could never catch you see Doctor Lecter, even in her heat, just never could get that silly girl pregnant.” He puts on a dramatic sigh and lets go of Will who falters again without being held up. The guard takes his arm again.

“I didn’t mean too.” Will whispers. His head held in shame, eyes downcast, his lip trembling.

“Of course you did! You should’ve been there Doc, such funny times. All the screaming ha!”

Will lets out a whimper. Hannibal has never seen him so… omegan. Mason has broken Will down so thoroughly he’s unable to hide his instincts. While in Hannibal’s home Will had been so brave, protective of his pup, strong. Even when tending to Will’s wounds early in their meeting, Will hadn’t made a sound.

“Margot knew it was going to die eventually Willy, she told you, I told you. It had all its insides outside!”

“Gastroschisis” Hannibal says.

Mason looks over to him, his eyebrows raised.”Hmmm?”

“The medical term for a pup born with their intestines on the outside of the body.”

Mason shakes his head in feigned sadness “It really was a mess, all wiggly on the outside. And Margot knew, she tried to tell you Willy, took it while you were sleeping and you killed her. Didn’t save the monstrous pup though did it!”

Will lets out a whine. It hurts Hannibal’s stomach, his ribs deflating painfully.

“She… she was beautiful” Will whispers.

“Nonsense!” Mason squeals. “And god knows what Lecter has put in you.” He prods Will in the stomach painfully, jabbing Will low down in his belly making Will grunt with pain. “Don’t worry though, Cordell is gonna deal with that and then,” Mason puts his hand round Will’s throat, tightening his hand and pulling him towards himself. “Then we can try again.” He growls.

He squeezes his hand tighter around Will’s throat, cutting off his breath making Will cry out in a choked off wheeze. He holds him there glaring at him, fascinated as Will’s face begins to turn dark red, his hands desperately trying to reach Mason’s wrist, the guards holding him in place.

Hannibal holds his breath involuntarily, reacting in sympathy. The moment seems to last forever then Mason shakes himself and lets Will go, who gasps in air, his mouth hanging open trying to fill his lungs again and again.

Mason nods to the guards and flails his hand about the entrance to the barn, gesturing for the men to leave with Will. Merry stays where he is waiting for his own instructions.

Will struggles now. Crying out and pushing his bare heels into the dirt of the barn floor. Tries to pull his arms from the punishing hold the guards have on him. Hannibal flexes his hands in his restraints, the motion caught by Mason from the corner of his eye. He turns and crouches in front of Hannibal again, not as close this time, wary of the Alpha now he has threatened his mate.

“What do we do with you Doctor Lecter? All that snooping around. I never knew you had it in you, you seemed so… bland. You know some very interesting people.” Mason laughs then

stands again. “And what about that lovely beta woman and her pup? You have your fingers in so many pies. What to do with them?”

Hannibal wants to ask after them, are they here? Are they hurt? He stays quiet.

“Funny thing is that pup doesn’t smell like you OR her.” Mason’s eyes have glazed over as he stands by the barn door. “He smells like… Margot.” His eyes snap to Hannibal. “I wonder if he’s an omega, pretty thing.”

Hannibal cant stop the growl that leaves his chest, the sneer on his lips or the way his nose scrunches up in anger.

Mason laughs again. “Oh ho ho! I think someone is angry… he your pup?” He saunters over to the pen again and stands over Hannibal. “Don’t worry Doctor Lecter, I’ll take real good care of him.” The flash of greed in Mason’s eyes makes Hannibal suppress a shiver, the shark grin is back.

He turns then and motions for Merry to lock the pen up again and follow him. Mason doesn’t look back as he exits the barn leaving the door for Merry to close behind them. As he does Merry says “Good to see you again Doctor Lecter.” Then closes the barn door.

From the space outside Hannibal hears Will scream his name. It’s a tortured, desperate yell followed by an omegan cry, high pitched and pleading. The sound rattles down Hannibal’s body deep into his bones, raising the short hairs all over his skin. He feels like a cat that’s been startled, shaking and fur standing on end.

He twists his wrist, feeling the rope burn the delicate skin. He pulls feeling the strain on his shoulders, the ligaments pinching in protest. Despite this he pulls again, his muscles groan under the pressure and he snarls. No matter how hard he pulls and twists he cant work his hands free from the restraints.

Will’s screams gets quieter until it they stop altogether. Hannibal is left in the silence of the barn, his own heaving breath and snuffling pigs for company. He closes his eyes, focusing on

breathing, trying to calm down and reassess his position. He clenches his fist and tries again to pull his wrists free to no avail.

After what feels like hours he can hear someone entering the barn and swinging the heavy door closed gently, but he doesn't care. He can still hear the cries of Will, the air is silent but in his imagination they sing out loudly, swirling around his head, folding over one another on loop. That cry, the omegan cry.

The latch to the pen is pulled and the door swung open. Hannibal looks up into the crystal blue eyes of a small terrified beta man.

Chapter End Notes

And I'm working on the 1500 kudos side fic as we speak. I'll post it as a separate part.
x x x

The Man in the Barn

Chapter Notes

> Hello Gorgeous, It's only 14 days till RDC6. I'm literally trembling with excitement.
> I didn't think I could concentrate enough to get a chapter done before it but tada! I'm not saying its a good chapter, its probably trash but yeah, I did it anyway.
>
> Love you
>
> WinstonsDad x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The beta man doesn't look Hannibal in the eye, the long thick scar that runs the width of his skull forces his hair to part at an odd angle. His eyes flick everywhere except for Hannibal's face and he wonders if Mason has that affect on everyone in his employ.

In his hands he holds a broom, it's trembling in his grasp. He's stood in the opening to Hannibal's pen wordlessly for over a minute.

"What is your name?" Hannibal asks gently, aware that this man could bold at any moment.

The beta shakes his head a little. His mouth opens then closes. He takes in a deep breath. "Peter." He whispers. He says his name in a childish manner, the 'r' at the end pronounced to sound like a 'or'.

"Can you help me Peter?"

Peter shakes his head, the movement jerky and uncoordinated. "No, n-n-no I cant." He stutters.

Hannibal sighs. He blinks a few times to try and clear his vision. "Peter, Will needs me."

Peter's head slowly turns to the closed barn door, his shoulders slump and he bites his bottom lip. "W-w-will. He… I m-m-missed him."

Hannibal feels like the world is crumbling around him. His ribs hurt, his shoulders are killing him, he's cold and he desperately wants to save Will. He swallows down his pride, his alpha arrogance, all the things that make him an aristocrat, all the things that make up his person suit, the impenetrable shield he's placed over his soft places and he begs.

"Please Peter, please help me save him." Hannibal whispers through clenched teeth.

Peter looks at him then, his eyes wide and bottom lip trembling. "I c-c-can't go with you."

Hannibal shakes his head, locking eyes with the beta. "Just untie me, then leave. No one will follow you. Find somewhere safe and call a number I will give you. You won't be in trouble, I promise you."

Hannibal can see the uncertainty in the other mans eyes, the fear of being punished for going against Mason. Peter looks about the barn, thinking, his eyes never focusing on any object for long. After a moment he seems to make his mind up and shuffles away.

Hannibal wants to scream after him, to get back here, untie me, I'll kill you if you don't. He begins to struggle again, the ropes biting his skin, his muscles throbbing. His mind begins to fill with his last vision of Will, bruised, bloody. His eyes tired, hope falling away like a tree shaking its leaves in the autumn ready for a barren winter. As though there were no one to help him. And currently, tied like a hog ready to breed, Hannibal cant help him.

Hannibal looks up as the shuffling gets louder again and breaths a sigh of relief that Peter has returned. He doesn't have his broom in his hands, instead he holds a pair of pruning shears.

His movements are hesitant, his eyes still scanning the empty barn, waiting for someone to jump out at him as though this was a test of his loyalty to Mason. Finally he bends in front of Hannibal, raises the shears and cuts the first rope holding Hannibal's head down.

The relief in his muscles after having just one of his restraints cut is palpable. Hannibal holds as still as he can, not wanting to scare the timid man, who now moves to cut the other rope on the metal collar around Hannibal's neck.

Hannibal lets his head fall forwards, sighing as his shoulders feel less of the strain.

After that Peter makes quick work of cutting the other ropes. He retreats quickly into the darkness at the edge of the barn once they are all cut and Hannibal stands.

He does so a little too quickly and the throb in his head worsens making his vision grey at the edges a little, he takes in a few deep breaths, unlatching the collar and letting it fall to the floor.

He closes his eyes and tentatively touches the back of his head to feel the wound there, the blood is dry and crusted over. He unties the ropes on his wrists as quickly as he can, ignoring the sting of the burns.

When he looks over at Peter the man squeaks and sinks even further into himself to try and hide, his shoulders rounding in fear. The stance is so similar to how Will would hold himself when first in Hannibal's home that it makes him want to roar in anger.

Peter closes his eyes and lifts a finger, pointing to the other side of the barn. Hannibal follows it with his eyes until he sees a pile of clothes on a dusty workbench, he strides over, keeping his balance somehow when his head gives a sharp stab of pain and his back clicks with the movement.

The clothes are old, dusty. Discarded work gear, but the dark brown, heavy cord pants fit, as does the dirty green sweater. Unfortunately there are no shoes. Hannibal turns as gently and non threatening as he can and lifts his hands in placation.

"Peter, can you remember a number?"

Peter nods, his eyes still closed, his hands tremble by his sides.

Hannibal tells him Jack Crawfords personal cell number, makes Peter repeat it twice before he's satisfied the man will remember.

"Tell Jack Crawford that Hannibal is with Mason, tell him Mason has Will."

Peter nods and opens his eyes, he's not looking at Hannibal but he can see the tiny thread of determination he has in his expression, his mouth a firm line.

"You can do this Peter." Hannibal adds firmly, not quite an order.

Peter nods again. "P-p-please save Will. And his p-p-pup."

Hannibal takes in a short gasp of air and Peter smiles, a small trembling thing, it lights up his whole face, not that Hannibal can see it really, with Peter's head bowed down, his gaze on the floor.

"No-no-no way that p-p-pup isn't his, c-c-curly hair and eyes like the wings of a blue-jay."

———————-

Hannibal makes Peter leave the barn before him, watching as the little man makes his way to the fence around the back of the barn, surprisingly quick, surprisingly quiet. He watches as Peter disappears into darkness and wonders why the man had never escaped before. Fear, he surmises.

On bare feet, his back still aching from being tied up, Hannibal takes large silent strides to the opposite side of the open yard, hoping that if he's seen, it's as far away from Peter as

possible.

Mason, in his arrogance and pride has no guards outside the barn. Hannibal feels a small twinge of triumph at Mason's complete underestimation of him. He tries to keep the thoughts of how many ways he can prolong Mason's suffering out of his head, he needs to stay focused.

Slipping past an unmanned guard hut, Hannibal ducks low to the ground, careful to stay out of the light that spills from inside though the window, trees and the boundary fence line to his right. Just as he passes the hut he can hear footsteps approaching on the left, two guards on patrol, they share a cigarette, passing it between them as they leisurely walk back to their post.

Hannibal ducks back behind the hut and waits for the first man to enter, as the second man takes one last drag of the cigarette, he strikes. Taking the man from behind, quickly bringing the shears across his throat, the blades open.

The man barely makes a noise but, as the blood rushes out of the gash across his throat, it loudly splashes on the wooden floor of the hut. The first guard turns then, his eyes wide in alarm and reaches for his weapon, Hannibal is faster.

He drops the first man's body and lunges towards the other, the shears raised up in a sweeping motion and he drags them through the chest of the first guard. The blade catches the guards chin in the motion, splitting it open, he staggers back, his body protected by a bullet proof vest, the only damage done is the injury to the man's chin.

Before the guard can assess what's happened, Hannibal strikes again, he brings the blade back down and stabs it through the man's left eye, pushing it deep into his skull.

He's dead before he hits the floor, a small cut off grunt falling from his lips before his arms fall straight by his sides.

Hannibal pulls out the blades, the man's eye slips out with them, falling silently down his cheek, his other eye wide, staring.

He takes a deep breath and wipes the shears on his pant leg, grimacing at the congealed mess of eye and blood.

He goes to the door of the hut and pulls the other body into the space, lifting their feet to check the size of their boots against his bare foot. They won't fit. For once, Hannibal curses his unique body, his slim long boned feet utterly frustrating right now.

He quickly leaves the guard hut, he is acutely aware of every brush of wind through the nearby trees, every blade of grass that bends under his tread, but its with almost tunnel vision he approaches the back of the stately house that sits in the middle of Mason's sprawling land. Through a gap in a hedge he presses himself to the wall by the servants entrance.

The door is shut, no light from the windows above him as he crouches low to the ground. He waits. He counts his heartbeats. He steadies each breath, calming himself. He wants to try the door, rip the handle open and launch himself into the space, but he can't. This needs to be done as quietly and calmly as possible.

So he waits.

His mind rebels as he tries to force the image of Will from behind his eyelids. Every blink brings the vision of Will, beaten, bloodied, resigned. His pale face full of shadows, the brightness of his sea foam eyes dulled into flat steel grey color, his plush lips a thin line.

He opens his eyes as the servant entrance door clicks open, and he watches from his hiding place as a man steps outside, illuminated by the dim light inside. He waits for the man to light his cigarette and calmly reveals himself.

The man, taken by surprise doesn't have time to even drop his lit cigarette before his neck is cleanly snapped, Hannibal catching him before he falls and dragging him into the small space he had just been in, invisible from the doorway.

He catches the door before it can shut and steps into the hall.

———————-

When Hannibal was young, he would often play hide and seek in the grand halls and rooms of his ancestral home. His little sister giggling her way from hiding spot to hiding spot to find him, calling his name as she got closer to where he hid, tucked into an alcove, behind a giant vase or large plant.

As Hannibal navigates his way closer to where he thinks Will is being hidden, he does just the same now. But no one is calling his name in their gentle tinkling voice, there are no giggles. All Hannibal can hear now is the blood rushing in his ears as he stalks from alcove to alcove, empty room to empty room.

He only finds one other guard, the man dozing on a chair outside a room. He dispatches him quickly using the shears he still has, stabbing the man with precision in the carotid artery, the spray arching away from Hannibal, dripping down the wall and door, the man gurgles a little then goes limp. Hannibal leaves him where he lays, his blood spilling out sluggishly onto the white marble floor.

He crouches down and checks the guards pockets. No key. He tries the door handle. Locked.

He pushes his ear up to the wood, the action reminiscent of listening to Will and Adam in his basement, he pulls his head away and shakes it. Then pushes his ear to the wood again. It’s silent inside.

No wait. It isn’t. From the other side of the door he can hear a small monotone hum. Adam.

He turns and leans his forehead to the door and sighs in relief. Adam is alive.

He taps on the wood gently and hears the movement of fabric rustle, then hesitant walking, the tapping of shoes across a wooden floor. The stride is that of an adult, short, female.

“Alana?” He quietly calls out, aware that his voice would carry in the wide open halls of the house.

The steps gather speed, scrambling almost. Then the door is being touched, it moves a little in its frame as its pushed from behind.

“Hannibal?” Alana asks.

“Yes, it’s me.”

He hears her let out a sob, he can see her in his minds eyes, her large blue eyes filled with relieved tears.

“Oh, thank god!”

“Are you ok? Is Adam ok?” He rushes.

“Yes!, yes we’re ok. Adam is scared. But we’re not hurt. I think Adam hurt those men more than they hurt him.”

“Good boy.” He whispers.

“He bit them Hannibal, got one man on his face, took a chunk out of his cheek.” Her voice shakes as she says it, half unease, half pride.

Hannibal wants to laugh with pride. He wants to break the door down and pat the pup on the head for a job well done. Ferocious boy, just like his father.

Instead he says “I sent someone to call Jack, they should be on their way.”

It’s quiet for a moment behind the door. “Was it that beta man?” She asks.

Hannibal nods then remembers she cant see him. “Yes, I trust him to call for help.”

He hears her sigh.

“I must find Will, Alana.”

“I need a weapon Hannibal, if you leave us please get me something to defend ourselves with.”

Brave, wonderful Alana. He wants to kiss her. He searches the dead guards belt, little pockets lined up around his hip. There is a small pocket knife in one. It’s blade is short but sharp, it will have to do. He pushes it under the door to her. He as goes to stand up he sees the tips of her fingers emerge in the small gap. He touches them with the tips of his own fingers and hears her whisper.

“Be careful.”

Hannibal steps backwards away from the door, everything in him urging him to go back, force the door open, protect the pub, protect Alana, free them. But he must get to Will first.

He turns and makes his way up to the first floor.

Chapter End Notes

I upped the chapter count. Oops.

Mason

Chapter Notes

Hello gorgeous.
Sorry for the long wait. I went to RDC6 and touched Mads Mikkelsen. He was so firm.
And cute.
And I've spent the last two weeks with the flu.

Slightly longer chapter than the norm. Enjoy.

Love you x x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal takes the stairs to the first floor swiftly. His bare feet padding on the marble. His breathing steady and hushed. The second floor is dark, no light peaking out from under any doors.

As he rounds a corner he can hear the deep rumble of an alphas voice coming from the end of the hall, the door to the room open, light spilling into the darkened hall.

He recognises the voice of Officer Merry, the words mumbled and vicious. His scent is mingled with that of others, betas, as Hannibal draws nearer. He keeps to the wall, moving swiftly until he’s just outside of the door.

That’s when he hears the crackle of a radio, a panicked voice coming through tinny and loud.

Merry barks back into his own radio. “Slow the fuck down, what’s happened?”

Hannibal catches the end of the sentence repeated twice to relay the message, his head tilted.

“He’s out, I repeat, Lecter has escaped!”

This makes things complicated. From behind him, down the stairs he can hear Alana scream. Her voice high and desperate. “Get the fuck off me! Let me go!”

The sound of a slap, an open palm to a cheek, rings out in the following silence. Hannibal feels his blood thicken, his anger beginning to peak. He’s desperate to get to Will but he cant leave Alana to get hurt, not when she’s with Adam.

As he turns on his heel to rush back down the corridor, the sounds of thick heavy booted soles come tumbling out of the room now behind him. Merry shouts “He’s here!”

Theres the sound of a gun firing once, the whisper of a bullet passes Hannibal’s ear as he ducks down, making himself a small moving target, the gun sounds again, the next bullet grazes his left shoulder as he swings down the stairs, taking two at a time to reach Alana and Adam. In his haste, with the sting of the bullet to his shoulder he drops the slippery bloody shears somewhere on the stairs, he can hear them tumble into the depths.

As he turns at the foot of the stairs a hand grabs his shoulder, he grabs the wrist, twisting the appendage back on itself, an ugly snap heard over the guards muffled grunt. He drops him to the floor, the man groaning and cradling his arm broken at an ugly angle.

The room Alana and Adam were being held in is open, Hannibal steps inside and he can see Alana against the furthest window, in her trembling hand is the small knife he gave her, there’s blood on the blade.

Standing in front of her is a guard, holding his cheek, his eyes wild and angry. Before he can raise his hand to her again Hannibal reaches around his shoulders, his elbow locking onto the guards throat choking him. The man claws at Hannibal arm, bucking his body to get him off.

Hannibal drags him backwards, using gravity to help strangle the guard, he passes back through the doorway and steps out of sight. The guard is gasping as he drops to his knees and Hannibal quickly tugs his head awkwardly to the side, breaking his neck, the vertebrae popping.

The other guards from upstairs have reached the bottom, looking at the chaos in front of them, too close to use their guns. Merry isn't with them. Hannibal leaps on the first man, his teeth bared in a snarl.

The man falls back under the alphas weight, his head cracking on the marble floor, he goes limp.

Hannibal rolls to the side, sweeps his leg under himself and kicks the next mans feet out from under him, he's on him in a second, twists the hand holding the gun under the man's chin and discharges the weapon.

The third guard is frozen on the spot, his arms uselessly by his sides, Hannibal rears up, his face impassive, blood dripping from his chin, he forces the guard to the wall with his forearm against his throat and growls.

The guard whimpers and Hannibal pulls back to look at his face. He nothing more than a child, wide eyed and shaking. Hannibal loosens his grip slightly, the boy sucking in a lungful of air as he does.

"Where is Will?" Hannibal growls.

The boy looks confused for a second. "Will?" He rasps.

Hannibal pushes forward again, tightening his arm on his throat. The boy squeaks.

"The Omega." Hannibal states. "Where is he?"

The boy shakes his head, panicking at his lack of knowledge. Hannibal sighs, he reaches up with his other hand and slams the boys head into the wall, knocking him unconscious. He lowers him to the floor, not too gently, but doesn't let his head hit the marble.

He looks to where he left the guard with the broken arm but he is now where to be found. Run away then.

He goes back to Alana, she's still by the window, Adam pushed behind her, her hand outstretched holding the knife. He holds his hands up in a placating gesture.

"Alana." he says gently.

She's shaking, her lip trembling, her other arm is wrapped around her back, protectively holding the pup.

"Oh God." She whispers. "Oh God!"

Hannibal reaches out and carefully opens Alana's tight grip on the knife, gently uncurling her fingers one by one. "It's ok, it's ok now." He says, keeping his voice calm but firm.

Once the knife is in his hand he closes the blade and pockets it. He expects Alana to fold, rush into his arms. Instead, his brave girl, turns, she kneels in front of Adam, pushing his curls out of his eyes to look at his face, then runs her hands up and down his arms, checking for any injuries.

She is remarkable.

She stands then, turning to Hannibal. Her eyes are filled with fury, their brilliant blue shine is radiant. She takes a step towards him then changes her mind, stepping back. Her brow furrowed. Hannibal laments her suspicion, he can see as her mind turns over the events that have unfolded, that he is more than he presents himself, more than just an alpha gone mad searching for his mate.

He takes a deep breath. "Barricade the door." He says. He takes one quick glance at Adam, he knows if he stops any longer, touches the pup, he won't be able to drag himself away until the boy is completely safe.

He gets to the door and hears a squeak behind him, as he turns Adam is rushing towards him, his eyes wide, his arms outstretched. Hannibal just makes it to one knee before the pup is colliding with him, reminiscent of their embrace in the study those long short days ago.

Adam wraps his hands around Hannibal's neck, pushing his face into his collar. Hannibal returns the hug, pulling the boy impossibly closer.

"I'm sorry I left you." Hannibal whispers into the boys hair. He smells of baby powder, sweat and fear. "I'm sorry little mouse."

"Haaa… Hammibil" Adam rasps out. His voice shy and quiet, his lips brushing the skin on Hannibal's throat.

Hannibal gasps and clenches his eyes shut. Adam's voice, soft and tinkling like Mischa's. Light, like the brush of a flower petal. A sunlit garden appears behind Hannibal's eyelids, the trees casting dappled rays of light on his hand as he looks down to see her small hand in his, her laughter fills his ears, sweet and innocent and so, so real, Hannibal can almost breath it in like air.

Hannibal's neck is wet with Adam's tears and he can feel his own slowly fall down his cheek into the boys fluffy curls.

"Oh my pup." Hannibal whispers back. "My pup."

He can feel his ribs tighten, the pain behind them riding up his spine like his heart is trying too hard to beat, his bones feel brittle. His jaw tightens then suddenly goes slack, he opens his eyes and Alana is watching them both, her hand to her mouth, her own eyes wet.

Hannibal gently takes Adam by the shoulder and pushes him back a little, the boy letting go hesitantly.

“I’m going to find your Mama, Adam.” Trying to make eye contact but knows the boy won’t allow it. His head hangs low now, his fringe falling across his brow, so much like Will it makes Hannibal’s heart ache.

Hannibal gestures to Alana to come and take Adam. She moves across the room, feet light but purposeful on the hard floor so as not to startle the pup when she takes his shoulder. Before Hannibal stands up he places a soft kiss on the boys head making his squeak a little with surprise. Hannibal smiles, it feels like a sin to smile while surrounded by death but his heart cant stop him. He’s so proud of the boy.

He straightens and puts his hand on the pups other shoulder, standing in front of him as Alana stands behind.

“There will be other guards, but I believe they will be following me now.”

She nods, unable to speak and Hannibal leaves the room.

_____-

He see’s no one else as he exits into the hall. The boy guard still unconscious on the floor. He sweeps his head to the left then right trying to decide where to go. They know he is free now, searching for Will. Mason will go where he feels he has the upper hand.

Pigs. He will go where there are pigs. Hannibal turns back the way he came, exiting the Mansion. There are no guards outside. Mason’s staff obviously don’t get paid enough to forfeit their lives and after seeing the destruction Hannibal has brought them, well, they must have fled.

Hannibal scans the surrounding grounds, he can see a large barn like structure to the East. Bare foot still he runs towards the barn, looking about him as he does for a rogue guard still willing to risk everything for a madman boss. There is no one.

He slows as he comes to the barn, ducking low and moves to the side of the building, away from the main doors that are closed.

Light comes out of the high windows, voices from within. Hannibal presses himself to the wall and skirts along until he comes to a door, there are no locks and the latch pops quietly. He looks through a tiny slit as he pulls the door open a fraction. There is no one there.

The invitation to enter is so obvious that Hannibal cant help himself. Mason knows he's coming, this is a trap. But, underneath the smell of pigs, shit and sawdust is the very distinct scent of distressed omega, distressed Will. It pierces through all the other scents trying to cloud Hannibal's mind. Mud, grass, the threat of rain, old wood, new wood, paint, the oak trees lining the edge of the open field he's in. Mason, Merry and an unknown beta man.

He opens the door enough to edge himself through the gap and enters the pig barn.

_____

From where he enters is a metal staircase leading up to a platform. Underneath are pigs. Many many pigs. They are caged together in sounders, three to a cage. The tops of the cages are open allowing the viewer on the platform to see them. There is a railing along one side of the platform, its open on the other three sides. He climbs the stairs, ready to fight whomever is waiting for him. As he reaches the top he can see Mason, his stupid white fur coat wrapped around his shoulders like a cape, his purple suit underneath ugly and garish.

Beside him is Merry, red faced and angry. His shoulders tight, a gun in his right hand pointing at the ground. For now.

And then he sees Will. Beautiful, beaten Will. Naked still and held tightly by the back of the neck by the beta man Hannibal could smell from outside. He's large for a beta, round bellied but tall. His large hand pinching the delicate skin on Will's neck. His face is one of feigned nonchalance, his scent is full of fear. On his cheek is a large sticky bandage. Hannibal smirks, proud of his pup.

Mason smiles as Hannibal comes into view. “Ah Doctor Lecter! Good of you to join us.”

Hannibal makes it to the top step and Merry raises his gun.

“Ah ah, that’s close enough Doc.” Merry states.

Hannibal stops. Straightens his back, rolls his shoulders and lifts his chin. “I am unarmed Officer Merry.”

“I don’t believe that for a second Doctor Lecter.” Mason laughs. “You’ve made quite the mess I must say.”

“It is regrettable. But was necessary.” Hannibal answers. His eyes sweeping over Will as he stands, frozen by the hand on his neck. His face betrays nothing, his eyes a little glassy. Hannibal wonders if they have drugged him into compliance, or if he is fishing in his little stream. Something he shared with Hannibal once over dinner. A way to escape dark places his circumstances send him too.

Masons begin slowly pacing up and down the platform, his Italian loafers almost silent on the steal platform.

“Now I think we can sort this out like reasonable men, don’t you?” Mason asks, his eyes flicking to Hannibal.

Hannibal tilts his head, listening.

“I have something you want, and you had something I own. Now…” Mason stops pacing and turns to Will.

“All this fuss over an omega, I mean really.” He feigns exasperation shaking his head. “I bet you’re loving this aren’t you Willy? Cordell here would never fuss so much over an omega

would you.” Mason looks at the beta man holding Will. The man looks over at Hannibal and slowly shakes his head.

“No, I would not.” He purrs, his voice deep and slimy.

Will doesn’t move, he doesn’t react at all to what Mason says. He hasn’t even looked at Hannibal.

Mason turns back to Hannibal, his hands in his pockets. “So! I’m willing to offer you a compromise Doctor Lecter, as I have so much respect for you. I’ll let Will here go full term with his bastard pup, let you have the woman and that thing she brought with her and when its all done I can keep Will.” Mason grins his shark grin, too many teeth on show.

Unacceptable Hannibal thinks. Completely unacceptable. He keeps his face an impassive mask.

“That’s very generous of you, Mason.”

Mason laughs again, a manic cackle. “I know! It’s so unlike me. But I must have Will you see. And all this muck and nonsense you’ve created is going to be hard to explain away, or pay away, you know…” Mason continues rambling on, enjoying the sound of his own voice as he paces the platform again, hands gesturing wildly.

It’s then that it happens. As Hannibal sweeps his eyes to Will’s face he can see Will’s attention has focused in on his. His eyes are pin sharp, mouth a firm line. The connection between them is like a whip cracking in the dead of night, striking in his power. And he knows, he knows what Will is planning to do.

As he watches Will lets his body go completely limp, falling to the ground, surprising the beta man, Cordell, who’s grasp on Will’s neck falters.

As Will slips to the ground Hannibal makes his moves, leaping forward like a pouncing cat as Merry's attention is taken by the falling omega, his eyes leaving Hannibal for a split second. But that second is all he needs, in three quick strides he barrels into Merry, the alpha falls onto his back with a startled cry, his gun slipping from his fingers across the platform and over the edge into the pig cages below. The pigs inside begin to squeal in alarm at the noises overhead, their voices raising in fear.

Hannibal strikes Merry in the face, once, twice, before the man recovers his senses and pushes Hannibal off of him with a knee to the chest. Hannibal rolls to the side rather than backwards and as Merry gets his feet underneath himself Hannibal is on his back, arms looping his throat and head, tightening and restricting his breathing.

But Merry is police trained and flips Hannibal over his shoulder to escape the hold, Hannibal lands on his back, his breath forced out of his lungs in a loud huff.

Hannibal rolls again, mindful of the edge of the platform and gains his feet and Merry searches the platform for his gun, obviously not realising it has fallen over the edge.

Hannibal looms towards him now as Merry begins to panic with the loss of his weapon and Hannibal takes him by the throat, wrapping his long slender fingers as tightly as he can. Merry stares into Hannibal's eyes, all bravado now gone, only fear shining out, he brings his arms up, out, and down trying to break the grip Hannibal has on his by knocking his elbows down but Hannibal doesn't budge, he pushes and squeezes until Merry is on the edge of the platform, his face turning red, then purple, his eyes bulging.

Then Hannibal let's go. Merry takes a gasping breath and tumbles backwards into the pig cages. Landing on the mud on his back. The fall isn't high enough to kill him, or even break a bone. But then Merry begins to scream.

Hannibal peers over the edge and watches as the first pig takes a bite out of Merry's bloody face, angered at having been fallen on. Its cage mates join in when the scent of blood begins to thicken in the air. Each one large and vicious, their tusks gouging holes in Merry's cheeks and neck as they devour him alive.

Hannibal doesn't wait to see the end result. He turns to Mason still standing on the platform, his eyes wide and manic. His laughter shrill, ugly. Hannibal can't see Cordell anywhere, the

fear having kicked in his fight or flight instincts and as a beta man Hannibal really cant blame him.

Will is still slumped on the ground, a semi sitting heap on the cold steal floor, head bowed, sweat damped curls sticking to his face and neck.

Hannibal takes a step forwards and Will suddenly comes to life, raising from the ground, his body taunt and flushed, his muscles bunching under his skin as he lunges towards Mason, a growl coming from behind his clenched teeth.

Hannibal would move to join him, ensure Mason is dealt with the viciousness from both their hands but as Hannibal begins to lean into his first step forwards towards a now roaring Will and cowering Mason, his throat is suddenly constricted by a chain falling over his face, held from behind.

His manages to raise one hand in time before the thick chain is fully wrapped against the skin of his throat, trapping his knuckles against his neck, his fist curling around the cold metal.

He’s yanked back, his attacker pulling and pulling to get Hannibal off his feet, towards the edge of the platform. Hannibal lets himself drop, a dead weight pulling the chain impossibly tighter, his barer now off balance by the sudden shift in gravity and Hannibal uses his free hand to grab the collar of his assailant and wrench him over his head, curling his body so the man tumbles over him and lands face first onto the floor.

The chain fails from his throat and he holds one end tight in his fist. Cordell grunts as he raises his chest, pushing up with his hands and looks up at Hannibal with something close to disgust and resignation. Hannibal swings the chain high, lets it smash Cordell in the face, then swings it back the other way, slashing it through the air like a whip to hit Cordell on the opposite side of his face. The man lets out a wet gurgle, his nose broken, his cheeks splitting.

Hannibal swings once more, twice more. Cordell doesn’t look up for long, Hannibal’s attacks now caving in the back of the man's skull until it is a bloody pulp.

His attention is drawn when Mason lets out a shrill cry, Hannibal's eyes snap up to see Mason laying on his back, Will astride him, his hands stiffly held into claws, fingers dripping with blood.

He watches in awe as the muscles in Will's bruised, scarred, back shift with each delicious swipe of his hands against Mason's face, the wet sound of thin skin being flayed open.

Will screams as he attacks Mason, all his years of hurt, of beatings, of the pain of having his daughter taken from him focused into this brutal act of vengeance. He's going to tear Mason apart and Hannibal is going to watch.

It's only when he see's Mason's arm shift that Hannibal realises something is wrong, the movement is jerky, sweeping from one side to the other. Will lets out a gasp and falls forward, his teeth against Mason's neck.

Hannibal darts forwards, his hands outstretched to pull Will back, as he nears he hears Will grit out:

"That thing is your son, Mason. And we are going to destroy your empire until there is nothing left but ashes."

Then Will's teeth close on the skin of Mason's neck and he pulls. He hits the carotid artery, his sharp incisors ripping the vein open, get gouts of blood spurt from the open wound and Mason lays there dying under the Omega he tried to forget, gasping and twitching like a fish dragged from the water to drown on dry land.

Hannibal takes in a deep breath to smell the omega before him, victorious. But the scent is all wrong. Instead the air is spiked with pain, with fear.

Will tumbles to the side of Mason's still seeping body, his arm wrapped across his narrow hips, his eyes wide. The movement shifts something on Mason's chest, his arm slips to the floor, his fathers knife sticky in his hand.

Hannibal falls to his knees beside him, dropping the bloody chain he still held. He looks down into Will's unblinking, frantic eyes.

"Will, Will!" He calls, his hand pushing Will's sweaty curls from his forehead as he had done with Adam moments before.

"Han… Hannibal…" Will groans. His voice tight.

Hannibal can now see the blood coming out of Will's abdomen, his thin arm and wrist unable to stanch the blood flow now that it has started in earnest.

Hannibal pulls his borrowed sweater over his head, pulls Will's arm away and makes a quick assessment of the wound. It's ugly and jagged and it's deep, deeper than a sweater can help, low down on his belly, muscles, large intestine, short intestine. Uterus.

He hastily folds the sweater, ignoring his Doctor brain worrying about germs, dirt, infection, and pushes it hard onto the wound. Will clenches his teeth and cries out, his eyes squeezing shut, shaking his head.

"Shhhh shhhhh I'm sorry" Hannibal coos, stroking Will's chest with his other hand.

Will shakily reaches up and grabs the fingers spread on his chest.

"A.. Adam?" Will whispers.

Hannibal sighs. "He's safe. He's safe." He assures Will.

Will tries to smile, it's a small trembling thing, his face a tense mask of pain. His eyebrows furrowed, his mouth is filling with blood, it stains his teeth.

“Keep…” Will tries, swallows and grimaces then tries again, his hand holding tighter to Hannibal’s. “Keep him.”

Hannibal shakes his head. “I won’t need to my darling. You’re going to come home.” Hannibal brings Will’s wet hand to his mouth and kisses his knuckles, ignoring the blood that now enviably stains is own skin.

“Thank you.” Will whispers. His voice is faint. Barely a sigh. Hannibal can see the light fading from him, his brilliant sea foam eyes losing their shine. Will blinks, struggles to open his eyes again then they roll up behind his eye lids, his hand becoming limp in Hannibal’s bloody sodden grip. His breath leaves his chest in a rattling sigh, then stills.

“Will!” Hannibal cries. Then roars so loudly that he doesn’t hear the sirens in the distance coming closer, he doesn’t hear his name being called by Jack Crawford as the alpha rushes into the barn and the bloody chaos laid at Hannibal’s feet.

He can only hear his own pained cry and his heart beating hard in his chest.

Chapter End Notes

Ruh roh....

The Beginning

Chapter Notes

Well Gorgeous, we've done it. 41 chapters. WOOOOOO
It's been a long slog but ive had so much fun writing this. I'm overwhelmed with the positive response from this fic. You guys are amazing. Thank you to everyone who has commented and given kudos, everyone on twitter, moots who have encouraged me when I've been feeling confused by my own story.
This chapter is for @MotherChesapeak (X handle) who is my twitter wifey forever. I love you <3

And I love you all as well. And... I'm not sorry. NOT ONE BIT.

WinstonsDad xxx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The pain is what wakes Will. It's low down in his belly, a grinding, pulling, sharp sensation. The room is bright behind his eyelids. Sounds come to him as though from underwater.

He grunts and reaches a shaky hand down under the thin blanket covering him and smoothes it across his stomach, he can feel a sheen of sweat covering his body, his skin damp.

The pain strikes again, the cramp making him roll on his side and draw his knees up. He lets out a huff and wiggles his toes in discomfort. He scrunches his eyes shut, brow furrowing.

The alarm clock starts blaring beside his head and he swings his arm out, slapping the top of the clock until it stops. His arm retreats back under the cover, pulling the thin blanket higher up over his shoulder. He feels both hot and shockingly cold. Sweat dampening his forehead.

He can hear his father already walking around the small mobile home they share, pots rattling on the stove, the broken coffee maker popping and creaking.

"Time to get up Will!" His father calls.

He hears plates being placed on the small veneer covered table in the living area, his father having put away his bedding in the storage under the couch. Silverware follows after, the clink of metal on plastic.

"Come on boy!"

Will groans, opens his eyes and tries to sit up, hissing when another cramp hits him. He realises he's full body shaking when he gingerly places his feet on the worn carpet. The carpet feels strange under his soles, scratchier than usual, itchy.

He opens his mouth to call out to his dad, but what comes out isn't words, it's a whine, high pitched and needy. He clamps his hand over his mouth, eyes wide.

The sound of Bill Graham eating his breakfast stops abruptly from behind the curtain partition. The creak of the sofa and Bill's boots making the short journey through the mobile home fill the silence. The curtain opens with a quick swish as Bill pulls its aside.

Will can't look at his father most days but this feels worse. His father had always resented him being an omega. Abdominal scans performed on newborns to determine if the male baby was an omega were mandatory in the state of Louisiana, and most parts of the US. Archaic and sanctioned by the heads of state, knowing the worth of their offspring days after they are born.

Every omega born in the united states was to be registered with the ORO. Omega Registry Office. The law stated that because Omega's are rare, they are to be paired with an Alpha, sometimes of their choosing, sometimes to the highest bidder. Alpha are seen as leaders, invaluable. They make great politicians, soldiers and CEOs.

If Will and his father didn't move around so much due to the nature of Bill Graham's work, Will would have been promised to an Alpha years ago, waiting to turn 16 ad be wed off, the alphas family paying a high dowry for the omega.

But they did move, a lot. So Bill Graham kept his son to himself, no Alpha interest until Will was 16 and then the plan was to let the register know he was ready to start looking for an Alpha.

His father steps into the room haltingly. His hands now at his sides. Will hears him take a big sniff, the sound comical in any other situation.

Will sits on the edge of his bed, shivering, despite the warm air, the sun pouring into his room.

"Thought we had at least another year." His father sighs.

Will looks up then, confused. "Another year for what?"

Bill puts his hands on his hips, his head tilted to the side. "For this boy! Yer heat."

"Heat." Will whispers looking away in shame.

Bill Graham was not a stupid man, but he wasn't a well educated man. When Will was 12 he had explained the birds and the bees to Will, as clearly as he could, explaining that Will was an omega, he could get pregnant. But Will's education on the subject had stopped there.

Will had never attended school, not in the traditional sense. Bill had been dragging Will out to boat yards for years, Will could take apart and put back together any boat engine you gave him. But reading and writing never came with it. That and there were no mainstream schools for Omega's in Louisiana, or Mississippi, or Texas. The states declaring that they all needed to attend a school just for them, private, expensive if they wanted to be educated. Not that

any private school really taught the omegas anything other than to submit, to cook, to clean, to be good omegas.

So Will didn't go to school. Bill didn't have the money and he needed Will to be aware of the world around him.

Bill sighs again and turns to leave the room, letting the curtain fall into to place. Will stares after him.

His heat? The only thing he knew about his heat was what he had overheard at the boat yards. Older men telling tales of whores and their slick, that heat made omegas ready for cock at any given moment, yowling like cats, needy, desperate. One alpha said there was nothing quite like the tight hole of a boy omega sucking you in begging to be roughly fucked, that an omegas tears tasted like salted honey.

At 15 Will wasn't totally innocent to the world around him, he knew men liked to brag, liked to talk big, especially Alphas. But information was scarce when you cant read, and there was no such thing as real privacy when you had to share basically one room with your dad. When Will was little it was often one bed too.

Another shiver racked up Will's spine and he gasped at the sensation. Then realised his briefs felt wet where he was sitting. A deep blush rose up his bare chest, neck and finally the tips of his ears.

The curtain was pulled back again and Bill glanced his son once before setting down his breakfast on the night stand. He left the room again without another word. When he came back a moment later he was carrying a tarp and a spare blanket, he gestured for Will to stand.

Will shrunk in on himself, his shoulder curling in shame. He stared at the tips of his fathers boots.

Bill didn't ask him again and placed the tarp and blanket on the floor then left again.

What followed were the most confusing 3 days of Will's young life. He was hot. Cold. Shivering. Sweating.

He wanted to rub himself against everything in his room but hated the feeling of anything touching his bare skin. Nothing tasted right but he was starving.

His cock was perpetually hard, even after jerking off so many times he swore his right arm was going to fall off.

On the second day while jerking off his hand slipped on his sweat soaked skin and his fingers brushed his hole, lightening lit up his nerve endings making him light headed. Keeping quiet after that was a struggle in the evening after his father returned home after work.

On the forth day his Dad woke him up and told him to shower. That it was over now and he needed him at the yard. Will woke in an exhausted haze but did as he was told. When he returned to his room, his bed had been stripped. Everything gone, including the pillowcases.

As he climbed into his dads beat truck he could see the burn barrel near their fire pit filled to the brim with all his soft bedding and the tarp.

_____-

It was roughly a week later that an Agent from the ORO came to see Will. She was tall, with a pitched looking face and hair tied in a tight bun. A beta.

They sat outside for the meeting, the Agent got the only chair that wasn't broken. Apparently someone was already interested in Will and was offering a handsome sum of money for him.

This part of the deal wasn't new to Will, he knew he was his Dads property, knew he would be sold off at some point. Bill had always told him that it was his best shot at a good life, a chance to eat well, live well. Staying with his father wasn't an option. The money was just a bonus. Being an uneducated hick of an omega didn't give Will a lot of choices of Alpha. Young, rich Alphas wanted Omegas from classy back grounds, sent to private schools. Will was lucky to have been chosen at all.

Bill Graham signed all the forms handed to him with his rough scrawl of a signature without reading anything.

The exchange was to happen the next day and would be held at the Town Hall in the next town over to theirs, an hours drive away.

That night Bill let him have a beer for the first time, told him he was a man now, that what was happening was a good thing, the only thing.

Will didn't sleep.

_____

Will sat in the passenger seat of his dads beaten up truck in his best shirt and pants, his boots that weren't too scuffed and his hair neatly combed.

The only one able to turn this all around now was the waiting Alpha, he could either say yes or no upon seeing Will, his dad had impressed on him the importance of first impressions.

"Don't be a smart ass." His dad said.

And when Will had rolled his eyes his dad had chuckled a little.

"Ok don't be a smart ass straight away. Give it a few days." He allowed.

_____

The Town Hall was more like a small church, wooden on all sides with a little steeple on top with a bell in it.

They were seated in a small room with a table and four chairs. Glasses and a water jug set out for them.

Will didn't know what to expect when the Agent from before and his new Alpha walked into the room but it was this.

An older man sat down with a sigh opposite Will. He wore a crisp white shirt, khaki coloured pressed trousers, loafers. He had a good head of hair for his age and had combed it to the side. No tie, no jacket. His face was lined but soft in a way. Dark eyes peered out from behind a pair of wire framed glasses, subtly looking Will all over, then his father, then Will again.

His hands were large and veined. A trade mans hands, rough and hard.

Will noticed his scent was like that of dandelions, tree bark and sage, it reminded him of fields of wildflowers, the open air, outside.

Both Will and the Alpha sat in silence until his dad said he would give them a minute, leaving with the Agent who protested a little but eventually left them alone.

The alpha cleared his throat first then spoke.

"Guess you didn't expect someone so old huh?"

Will looked down at his lap, his hair falling across his forehead. He didn't answer.

The Alpha, Gerald Webb, as he had been introduced by the ORO Agent, leaned forward, placing his elbows on the table, hands clasped together.

"Look son, I'm gonna be honest with you. Can I be honest with you?" His voice was gentle.

Will looked up and nodded, biting his bottom lip.

"Good, good." Gerald sighed and nodded. "I'm not some old pervert looking to mate a pretty little omega for some god knows what." He waved his hand dismissively. "I'm far too old for all this mating business, and I wouldn't sully my wife's memory, god bless her soul."

Gerald slumped back in his seat.

"I'm here for a companion of sorts. I don't have a lot of money, I can't afford private carers to come in to my home every day and do the things I can't do for myself. And… and I don't want a different stranger asking how to do things the way I like them at every visit. I need someone to live in my home, keep me company really…"

He tapers off in a stutter and Will, god damn himself, thinks it's endearing. He smiles and lets out a huff of a laugh.

"Where erm… where do you live?" Will asks in a whisper.

Gerald smiles at him, happy to hear his voice.

“Minnesota. Real green there. Quite different weather wise than here in the South.”

Will nods. “I can garden, grow things, vegetables and herbs.”

Gerald nods too until they’re nodding at each other and laugh a little. He leans forward into the table again, closer to Will.

“I won’t mate you, I won’t bite you. And when I’m dead you can go on a get a husband or wife and have pups if you want to. I’ll make sure you’re taken care of.”

Will lets himself smile. It’s a good arrangement. He can do that. The fear that had been coiling low in his belly seems to drift away, the tension in the room easing off. The image of an overbearing, aggressive Alpha that was floating in Will’s imagination wilts away and is replaced with the image of lush green gardens, a vegetable patch and maybe some good company.

_____

The goodbye between Will and his father is brief. He hands Will is small duffel bag, containing all of Will’s belongings. Some clothes, a photo of his mom and dad on their wedding day, his plush dog toy, some tools his father gave him as gifts. He pats Will on the shoulder, leans in and kisses him chastely on one cheek, then the other.

“Sois un bon chiot” he whispers. Will nods. His words lost in the grief of saying goodbye.

At the gate to his plane Gerald is waiting, his own luggage a large suitcase on wheels. He’s dressed casually, like an old man would, polo shirt, khaki trousers, loafers.

He smiles as Will walk towards him, holds his hand out to take his bag. Will shakes his head and instead holds his own hand out for Geralds. The alpha laughs and hands it to him making Will grin.

They fly business class and Will cant believe the luxury and opulence of the seat he’s in. Gerald chuckles when Will’s eyes light up at the tv screen in the seat rest in front of him. Will pushes all the buttons of the touch screen then ultimately turns it off, just wanting to touch it, see if it’s real.

Will gets handed a ‘care package’ by the stewardess as she passes, handing them out to all the business class passengers. He looks at Gerald confused.

“It’s just an eye mask to sleep better, maybe a tooth brush and tooth paste. No big deal.” Gerald shrugs.

Will opens his gently and true enough there’s an eye mask, toothbrush and paste, a small bottle of sanitising hand gel and a leaflet about the airline. Will puts them all back after

inspecting them one by one. He tucks the little fabric bag under his leg. Then looks out of the window as the plane takes its last turn onto the runway.

The noise is overwhelming, the plane gaining speed up the runway, there's a jerk and then stomach sinking feeling as the tires leave the ground.

He looks over at Gerald again smiling.

"You're flying Will." Gerald chuckles.

Will laughs breathlessly and looks back out of the window as the airport, the ground and the buildings all become smaller and smaller.

The flight takes two and half hours and Will is pressed to the window the entire time. Watching the clouds sweep by. Trying to understand how he's seeing the clouds from above not below, the wrong side in his mind.

Gerald passes him a can of coke at some point and Will sips on it, letting the bubbles settle his stomach.

The landing is bumpy, and Will grips the armrest between himself and Gerald and the old man pats his hand gently.

Gerald's house isn't big but isn't small either. The garden out back is spacious and green. So green. The dirt looks dark and rich. Will can imagine digging through it with his hands to pull up potatoes and carrots.

Gerald gives him a small tour, the well equipped if not a little old fashioned kitchen in yellows and creams. The downstairs wash closet, the TV room as Gerald calls it, with his recliner and little decorative ornaments on neat shelves.

Gerald takes him up to the second floor and shows Will the room he will be staying in. The wall paper is light blue. A single bed against the wall, empty book shelf, dresser, wardrobe.

They look at the bathroom, with a shower over the bath, toilet, sink. Decorated in pink. Then finally Gerald shows Will his own bedroom, its chintzy, a frilly bedspread and lacy curtains at the windows.

"I haven't decorated since my wife passed. Didn't see the need really. It's all still serviceable, and I have to admit I have no idea what I would change it too. It was her area of expertise really." Gerald admits.

"It's nice." Will offers. "Makes everywhere look soft."

Gerald smiles and nods. "Yeah she was that I suppose. Made everything nice."

He offers to make Will something to eat and Will shakes his head. Not hungry after all the travel and saying goodbye to his dad.

“Well, I’m gonna take a nap. That motel I stayed at had real uncomfortable beds I tell you.” Gerald huffs. “No good for my back. You be ok to wander around? Get to know the place?”

Will nods and goes back downstairs as Gerald closes his bedroom door.

———————-

Will learns, very quickly, that Gerald does like things done a particular way. He has a certain cup for his morning coffee, another for his afternoon cup of tea. He likes the croissants from the bakery up the street but not the donuts.

Lettuce goes on top of the cheese in a sandwich and he only likes one small scoop of mayo on the bread, cucumber is to be peeled before its sliced.

He watches the 12pm news broadcast but not the 2pm one. Will suspects its because of the good-looking female presenter on the 12pm slot but he doesn’t say it.

He likes Jeopardy, not Wheel of Fortune, and shouts at the silly answers given in a rush on Family Feud.

Any instruction given to Will is done with patience but expected to be remembered. And Will tries his hardest. He really does.

Will forgets to butter Gerald’s toast as soon as it’s out of the toaster so the butter melts, he hands Gerald his lunch with still visible swipes of butter on the bread and Gerald calls him back into the TV room.

He holds the plate out to Will. “Will, I don’t like cold butter.”

Will’s heart drops, he shakily takes the plate from Geralds outstretched hand, expecting the man to hit him as he does. Like his father would when Will would mess something up. He flinches away and rushes back to the kitchen to redo the toast.

When he hands it back, correct this time, Gerald ask him to sit with him for a minute. Will takes the seat beside the recliner. It’s simpler, plush cushioned chair, with puffy arms and back. Something to snuggle into.

“Why did you flinch when I handed you the toast Will?” Gerald asks gently, talking around a mouthful of food.

Will fidgets nervously. He doesn’t know what to say. That is dad would sometimes slap him upside his head with an open palm when Will messed up. That he would use a belt when he felt Will was being particularly troublesome, like the time he fell off the boat on the river while they were fishing, scaring every living thing in a mile radius. He watches his own hands on his lap, his fingers entwined.

“Your father? He hit you when you got things wrong?”

Will nods sheepishly, curls falling about his head.

Gerald nods and takes another bite of his bread, chews it then swallows. “Look at me Will.” He says firmly.

Will looks up, his eyes not quite meeting the old mans, his chin, his temple.
“I will never hit you. You hear me? You could get my toast wrong every day and I would never lift a finger to you. Ok?”

Will deflates a little. Relieved. “Yes sir” he whispers.

Gerald waves his hand in the direction of the kitchen. “Good, now go get my tea boy, I’m parched from all this damned bread.”

Will smiles and rushes to the kitchen to fetch the tea ready in its pot, Geralds tea cup on the tray.

_____

The years pass in a kind of domestic haze. It’s comfortable with just the two of them. They celebrate Christmas together, a little gift given to each other. Gerald knows Will’s birthday from his paperwork and gives him small presents, new garden tools, a nice suit. Will finds out Geralds birthday by accident when the old man lets it slip while showing Will family photos one day and Will bakes him a cake with candles.

He doesn’t want for anything, clothes, food, kind words. Gerald has an adult son and daughter that don’t visit, Ben and Maria, he’s shown Will photos of them when they were children, then teenagers. He doesn’t have many photos of them as adults but they are unmistakenly his children. They both have his brown eyes and dark hair, although Geralds hair is now a wispy grey colour.

Will hears him talk on the phone to them once in a while. The calls are brief and Gerald always looks a little sad when they end. On those days Will is content to sit at Geralds feet beside the recliner as Gerald strokes his hair, watching TV together. It’s a simple submissive thing to do as an omega and Will doesn’t mind it one bit.

On the day Gerald dies, Will is in the back yard tending to the tomatoes. One of Geralds particular things was tomatoes. They had to be at least three inches wide and not too past ripe. All the little ones Will would eat himself, never too fussy about food.

Gerald had called to Will from his recliner in the TV room, the sound muffled by the distance but Will hadn’t gone right away, too focused on his task. With a little bowl now full of all the small ripe tomatoes, Will walks back to the kitchen, placing the bowl on the unit.

He remembers then Gerald had called him and goes to the TV room.

As he walks in he thinks Gerald is sleeping, his eyes closed, arms slack on the armrests, mouth slightly open. He smiles and walks closer, intending to cover him with the blanket that

rests over the back of his own chair beside it. But as he gets closer he can see how pale Gerald is, his eyes not quite closed.

He frowns, his brow creasing. “Gerald?” He whispers, his voice suddenly small in his throat. He steps closer, laying his hand on the top of Geralds older one. He’s cool to the touch.

Suddenly Will’s heart beats harder and faster in his chest, he grabs the hand under his and gives a little tug. “Gerald?” He says louder, panic beginning to settle under his skin.

He drops the limp hand and touches the man’s face. His skin is cool, dry, his stubble scratchy under Will’s palm. Will moves his hand to Gerald’s chest, places over his shirt, where his heart is. Geralds chest isn’t rising and falling, his heart isn’t thumping.

Will crumples to the floor. Tucks his knees under his chin and hugs his shins. He rocks back and forth as he cries. He doesn’t know how long he sits there. Hours maybe if the movement of the sun across the sky through the big bay window is anything to go by.

Will’s ass is numb by the time he stands. He places the blanket over Geralds body and goes upstairs to his room.

He doesn’t know what to do. They never talked about this. What to do if Gerald passed away at home. It wasn’t supposed to happen yet. It should have been years away. Not yet. Not yet. Is all Will can think.

He doesn’t know any numbers to call. He doesn’t know the numbers of Geralds children, as far as he knows Gerald never wrote them down.

Right now all Will can think to do is sleep. He lays down, closing his eyes and drifts into a fitful slumber filled with dreams of walking in just in time to save the old man somehow, and others where he is days, months, years too late and its nothing but bones resting in the recliner, the TV blaring.

Will searches the house, the TV room, Geralds bedroom, he cant find any numbers for Geralds son and daughter. Eventually, late in the afternoon the day after Gerald died Will calls an ambulance.

They don’t rush over. When they arrive its with a black van too. He lets everyone in, not talking, just pointing to the TV room. No one questions him, no one asks who he is.

The take Gerald out of the house in a black body bag and place him in the black van.

A man wearing a suit gives Will a business card and tell him they will inform next of kin. He nods and closes the door.

Will goes to his room and sits on his bed. He thinks about leaving. About packing his bag and walking away, but he doesn’t. Gerald promised him he would take care of him, said he would

have a good future once he died. So Will waits. And waits. And waits.

Finally after two weeks Geralds son and daughter let themselves into the house. Will hears it from his room and gently walks down the stairs. He can hear them arguing in the TV room, something about money and inheritance.

Will stops in the open door, his head hanging low, shoulders curled in.

Maria screams first and before he can say anything Will is being shoved against the hallway wall, a forearm to his throat pinning him in place. He tries to choke out a few words but Geralds son, Ben, just pushes harder.

“Who are you!” Ben shouts in his face.

Will tries to speak again and Ben shifts back to allow him. “I live here.” He rasps out.

“I’m calling the police!” Maria shouts, her shaking hand reaching into her pocket for her cell phone. “You cant just break into someone’s house and move in!"

Will shakes his head and whimpers. “Gerald, he bought me.” Will cries.

Ben immediately drops his arm and Will sinks to the floor in a heap, gasping, his hand to his throat.

“Oh my god.” Maria says. “You’re an omega?” Her voice filled with disgust.

Ben turns to her confused. “What?”

Maria stomps back into the TV, grabbing Ben’s arm as she goes, dragging her brother with her.

Will stands shakily, coughing a little. He follows them into the room, stands by Geralds chair.

“Did he buy you for sex?” Maria spits at him, the venom in her voice almost filling the air.

“What?” Ben asks, his eyes wide. “Thats disgusting.”

Will shakes his head. “No, no not that. I’m his companion. I… I… cook, clean.” His voice falters, unable to finish.

Maria pinches her brow, the movement so reminiscent of her father Will’s stomach clenches a little.

“Where is he?” He asks. “Gerald? Where did they take him?”

Ben steps forward then, his hands on his hips. “Why?” He sighs.

Will takes a deep breath. “I… I didn’t get to say goodbye. I called the ambulance and they took him. But I don’t know where. Is there a funeral? Can I go?”

The sibling look at each other, Maria narrows her eyes.

“Please?” Will asks, his eyes wide. “Please? I just want to say goodbye.” His voice trembling.

“Go to your room, I presume you have one?” She says not looking at him.

Will nods and does as he’s told, what else can he do. He can hear the hushed voices of the brother and sister downstairs, sometimes rising a little in disagreement. He knows they’re fighting about him. He can only hope that Gerald did as he promised. Eventually he hears them leave.

_____

Will is woken early the next day by a knocking on his bedroom door. He gets up, pulls on his robe, another gift from Gerald, and opens his door.

Ben is standing in the hallway, his shoes still on. Gerald hated shoes in the house. He smells of anger, disgust and exhaustion.

“Get dressed.” He tells Will.

“Why?”

“You wanted to say goodbye right? We’re going to the funeral today. Put a suit on or something I dunno.” Ben says, waving his hand and walks away, going downstairs.

Will wants to smile but sadness stops him. He’s grateful though. He’s going to get to say goodbye. And then, then he can start the next part of his live Gerald had promised him. The get married, have pups, be safe and happy part.

He gets dressed in the suit Gerald got him for his birthday. It’s not much, it’s not black but he’s ok with that. He knows Gerald wouldn’t mind.

He gives his nicest shoes a quick wipe with a cloth in the bathroom then walks downstairs.

He find’s Ben in the kitchen looking out of the window above the kitchen sink.

“You did that?” Ben asks him. He's looking at the little fenced in vegetable garden Will started planting his first spring with Gerald. It's becomes lovely and lush over the years, although Will cant bring himself to pluck anymore tomatoes from their vines. Most have died and fallen off littering the bottom of the plant with brown blobs.

Will nods. “Yes, I planted the vegetable garden.”

Ben nods then gestures for Will to go to the front door. Will feels a sinking sense of dread in the pit of his stomach at leaving the house. But he pushes it further down until he cant feel it. He’s going to say goodbye to Gerald. Thats what matters now.

———————-

The car journeys long. Ben puts the AC on and the chilled air makes Will's skin goosebump. They pass cemetery after cemetery. Will watches the headstones pass in a blur as they keep driving.

He wonders if he will remember where they're going so he can visit the grave sometimes, maybe bring flowers.

The lull of the engine pulls Will down into a light sleep and he doesn't notice how many more cemeteries they pass. When he opens his eyes its getting dark out, he stretches in his seat and looks over at Ben who has a grim look of determination in his eye.

"How much further?" Will asks hesitantly.

Ben doesn't answer him, doesn't look at him. His grip tightens on the steering wheel.

They're driving down a long road surrounded on both sides by tall trees, no houses, no driveways. Eventually Ben turns on the satnav in the car and follows the directions down a dirt road.

Will's heart starts thumping hard in his chest. His hands shaking.

"Where… where are we going?" He whispers. Ben doesn't speak, just looks ahead on the dirt track ahead.

Will looks out of the windscreen and see's a warehouse come into view, cars lined up in front of it, their headlights beaming onto the front of the open warehouse doors.

Men with guns stand on either side of the door, they're wearing balaclavas.

Will's head snaps to Ben, his eyes wide filling with tears. "Ben please where are we?" He says, his voice cracking. "Please tell me!"

Ben says nothing. He pulls up the car and stops the engine. The silence in the car is deafening. He doesn't look at Will, still says nothing. He undoes his seat belt and steps out of the car, not bothering to close the door. Will watches him round the hood of the car and stop at his door.

He pulls open as Will begins to cry, clutching onto his own seat belt. Ben struggles with him and finally manages to undo the belt and pulls Will out by the top of arm.

Will cries out, his shoes dragging on the gravel as Ben marches him towards the warehouse doors.

“No Ben! Please! I didn’t do anything! I promise! I was good!” Will cries over and over again.

A man steps forward and takes Will’s other arm and begins to pull him towards two other men wearing surgical masks. The place smells overwhelmingly like Alphas and fear. It’s pungent and makes Will choke. He coughs and tries to cover his nose but another Alpha grabs his arm now free from Ben’s grasp.

He watches as Ben talks to an Alpha seated at a small desk near the opening of the warehouse. He cant hear what they’re saying over his own cries for help. He struggles to free himself from the tight grip on his arms and is back handed across the face by one of the alphas in the surgical mask. The latex glove he’s wearing rips the skin of Will’s top lip, the sting of it blending in the pain of strike.

Will’s knee’s sag and he’s held up by the men holding his arms. He cries out to Ben again but he cant see him anymore. The alpha who back handed him steps forward once more and wretches Will into standing by grabbing his hair and pulling him up.

His suit jacket is pulled off him, his tie, his shirt next. One of the alphas makes a joke about him being a pretty gift all wrapped up nicely as another takes his shoes, his socks. His pants come off next, then his briefs.

There’s a grunt beside him as the other man in a surgical mask looks him up and down.

Will tries to cover himself with his hands now his arms are free but the alphas just laugh.

The man at the desk who spoke to Ben walks over to the group surrounding Will, they part for him and the man rakes his eyes up and down Will’s pale body, the cold glare makes Will shiver.

“Guy said he’s a virgin.” He says nodding towards Will.

One of the Alpha’s whistle. “Nice.”

“Check him.” He says to the man in the surgical mask and walks away.

Will watches as surgical mask nods to the other alphas beside Will who grab him again and force him to his knees, someone then grabs the back of his neck in a brutal squeeze, pushing his face down into the concrete, cutting into the delicate skin of his cheek.

“Hey don’t mark up his face anymore!” Comes a shout from somewhere and the grip on Will’s neck lessens a little.

There’s no warning to the gloved finger penetrating his hole. It’s painful and Will lets out a strained grunt, gritting his teeth. Thankfully it’s removed quickly and they pull Will to his feet. They frog march him forwards and Will can now see the shipping container to the back of the warehouse hidden in shadow.

Another man pulls open the latch, swinging the door open. The smell that hits Will is of fear, omega, sweat and pain. It’s so strong it makes Will struggle again, pulling his arms and trying

to stop his feet. They drag him anyway. Cutting the tops of his toes and feet as they drag him over the uneven concrete floor.

He's shoved through the small door and it closes with a loud thud behind him surrounding him in suffocating darkness. He gasps for breath, wrapping his arms around his small chest. He can't see. He can barely breathe. The pain in his jaw and feet throb with his heartbeat rabbiting in his chest.

He stumbles forwards in the darkness, unsure of where to go, his hands spread before him.

He gasps when a damp hand grabs his own and pulls him to the floor. Thin arms wrap around him and the only thing he can think of doing is curling his own arms around the figure holding him. Their skin is clammy where they touch, the other omega as naked as he is.

In the darkness they hold each other, weeping silently.

Chapter End Notes

Yeah. So that happened.

This story will continue in the next part in this series - Cages in the Basement

Come find me on twitter @WinstonsDad

love you x x

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!